

# LONDON SOCIETY.

FEBRUARY, 1897.

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## **"Forbidden."**

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"LED ON," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER I.

#### ANY FAITH IN HEREDITY?

EDWARD CHARLES KENNARD was appointed to the See of St. Christopher's in the Spring of the year 189- and he probably owed his elevation to the fact that his work on the "New Criticism" had caused a great sensation. "The Rock," "The Record," "The Guardian," and "The Church Times," all joined in a chorus of approval, whilst the Agnostics, Freethinkers, and Elsmerites, etc., etc., scoffed and jeered at it to such an extent that the book was wafted on a wave of popularity through edition after edition, and its Author on to a comfortable seat on the Episcopal Bench. His only sister, Miss Judith Kennard, remained for days in a state of ecstasy. She had looked upon her brother as the best of men, but now she considered him as something more bordering on the divine. She thought that she must give up calling him "Ned" for the future. There was a touch of the schoolboy in the flighty monosyllable, and Edward would certainly sound more respectful. She sighed a sigh of vain regret as she remembered that he had narrowly missed being named Clement after a deceased uncle. Clement! An ideal name for a Bishop, even if he never meant to come into prominence as a martyr. It was an immense pity, but Edward had done very well for Edward the Confessor, so she hoped that a Bishop of St. Christopher's could put up with it; and "Ned" must be banished for ever from the tip of her tongue, and never thought of even in her dreams.

There was one person who naturally would have had a great deal to say on the subject—Beatrice, the Bishop's only daughter; but at present she was fully occupied with the tremendous fact of her own approaching marriage, and she could only take short views of life in every other direction. When the news reached her she flung her arms in a burst of enthusiasm round her father's neck, and told him with her usual impartiality, that he would make "the most beautiful Bishop in the world," but before she could enter into the smallest discussion of its more serious side, she was called away to a modiste in the drawing-room, whilst a milliner was waiting with impatience for her in her own private den. Beatrice was not addicted to the worship of "chiffons," but she knew that a bride must be clothed, and that the clothes must be pretty, so that her husband need not be ashamed to go out with her. At the first ordering, the trousseau seemed the most delightful field for occupation; but the pleasure had palled, as most pleasures do when carried to excess, and now she hated the sound of her dressmaker's smooth voice, and loathed the sight of her milliner. Even presents lost their charm after the first, and as every knick-knack arrived, it was greeted with a sigh as she thought of the polite note of thanks which would be expected in return. Every one knows that this is the inevitable fate of a present before it has developed from the common run of parcels into a diamond necklace, or a massive silver tea-pot, but when the note has been written, the debt of gratitude discharged, then its time for real appreciation comes.

It happened that one day when the wedding was thrillingly near, Mr. James Pemberton, the old chum of the newly made Bishop, came to pay a congratulatory call at No. 17 Eaton Place. He was a clean-shaven man with a clever forehead, and a long nose. His chin also had the power of elongating itself, when its owner was displeased, and acted as a danger-signal to his many friends. For he was a man of many friends, in spite of an occasional dryness of manner, which checked spontaneous bursts of confidence, and belied the natural warmth of his heart. But those who knew him well knew his worth, and those who had gone down into the depths had often found his kindly hand stretched out to help them back. Now he was full of the kindest thoughts towards the father whom he had known ever since they were undergraduates together at Christchurch; and the daughter in whom he had taken a special

interest from the moment that she emerged out of the indefiniteness of long clothes into the more satisfactory certainty of short petticoats; but just because his intentions were so kind his observations were particularly disagreeable.

The Bishop had just been telling him of his plans, which were gradually shaping themselves in his busy mind. He meant to remain where he was till after his daughter's marriage; but meanwhile he had already fixed on a house in Talavera Crescent, where he intended to take up his abode, at least for a time.

"A disgusting hole!" remarked Pemberton, with a grimace as he thought of his own pleasant surroundings in Palace Gardens.

"Yes—outrageous from an æsthetic point of view," the Bishop said with an amused smile as he thought of the long straight streets without one redeeming point in the way of architecture, and with a dirty slovenly population neither picturesque in its ways nor polite in its habits. "But it's about the worst part of my diocese, and I feel that I ought to be there."

"Strange idea of economy to pay rent for a house in the slums, and leave a Palace untenanted in St. Christopher's," with a flavour of sarcasm in his tone, although he thoroughly appreciated the Bishop's motives.

"Economy is a very good thing in its way but there are times when it has to be put on the shelf. I can run down to St. Christopher's when I want to entertain the clergy, for I know I shall be expected to feed the bodies as well as the minds of my flock, and you will have to come and help me," with a kindly glance.

"You will have to get Lady Falconer to do the honours."

"Yes, when her husband can spare her, but I'm perfectly conscious that I shall lose my little girl without getting an equivalent in the shape of a son," the father said very gravely as he took up a paper-knife and began to cut the leaves of a Magazine.

James Pemberton had not the smallest doubt of it either, and he did not feel called upon to invent a soothing falsehood. He often told an unpleasant truth, and trod on people's tenderest feelings when there was no necessity for the effort; but he never was tempted to err in the other direction.

"Do you believe in heredity?" he blurted out after a pause, simply because it was the last subject he ought to have started under present circumstances.

"I suppose every one does to a certain extent, but I am not an Ibsenite, if you mean that. A physical taint will of course descend from father to son, but I refuse to believe that a drunkard's son must be a sot, or that the son of an immoral man must run away with his neighbour's wife."

"Lucky for you, if you don't," rejoined Pemberton drawing in his lips. "Falconer's father was about as good an example as you could find of every vice under the sun."

"I know it," the Bishop said quietly, but with a look of pain in his frank eyes. "But Falconer was very little with him, and there is nothing against the son. I have made most careful inquiries and I know there isn't," he insisted, as Pemberton raised his eye-brows uncomfortably.

"He has been out of England a good deal hasn't he?—out of sight, and out of hearing," he added in an undertone.

"He has travelled certainly, and I consider it a very good thing for a young fellow with plenty of cash, and an endless amount of leisure. Come into the next room, and see the presents," he suggested as if to change the subject. "Yours occupies a conspicuous place, and Bee says she likes it better than anything else."

Pemberton's face lost its judicial expression and assumed that of a benevolent friend, as he followed the Bishop into the drawing-room.

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## CHAPTER II.

### "ONE OF MY OLDEST FRIENDS."

OH the clatter of tongues! James Pemberton felt almost irresistibly impelled to put his hands to his ears, but fortunately some inward grace of courtesy stopped him in time, and he tried to look as conventionally amiable as possible. The drawing-room in No. 17 looked like the agglomerated sections of the principal shops in Regent Street or Bond Street, with some of the crowd from Rotten Row turned in to look at them.

"Such diamonds!" exclaimed that flighty Queen of fashion, Lady Crosby. "If she begins with a tiara like that, how will she end? That is what I want to know."

"But why, Lady Crosby?—the beginning is everything—the end nobody need find out," remarked Major Mortimer in his carefully arranged drawl.

"Everything is found out in these open-air days that we live in. If I picked your pocket this moment, my husband would hear of it in New York before he went to bed."

"Would he?" slowly, "then I wonder that he stayed two hours in America."

"Why? I never picked yours or any one else's," looking up at him, her blue eyes full of surprise.

"No—no more you have," he said as an after thought.

Lady Crosby blushed slightly as she turned away with a laugh. Many were the scrapes she got into through sheer audacity and thoughtlessness; but she contrived to keep them very carefully from Sir Digby's ears, and she did not want to be reminded of them in cold blood. Feeling rather cross, she threw a spiteful glance at a startling apparition in red and green, with a large white hat and a plume of yellow feathers, turning upwards from a fair face with an elaborated complexion, and a fringe of hair as red as a sunset.

"For pity's sake tell me, who is that creature dressed in a flag?" turning round again.

"Wife of a fellow who paints," replied the Major promptly, for he was a walking London Directory.

"A little vague? Have I seen his pictures?"

"Yes—Niobe—you know."

"Oh—Niobe?"—doubtfully. "She was that very doleful person, wasn't she, who did nothing but cry? I wish this woman had lost all her belongings" viciously.

"Why? She has done you no harm."

"Then she would wear mourning, and not make my eyes ache."

"There is something sublime in your selfishness."

"Selfish? I don't see it," in a matter of fact tone. "It would be better for all the rest of us here—the greatest good of the greatest number—that is what we ought to strive after I believe."

"And you arrive at it by studying Number One. You are very clever," he added with a curious smile.

In the midst of the laughter and chatter stood Beatrice Kennard in the crowd, but not of it, for the moment. She seemed to be separated from the frivolous set around her by the gravity of her thoughts, and yet there was not the slightest shade of unhappiness in her large dark eyes, or her distinctly curved mouth. She was on the brink of a great event, standing before a closed door which had to

be opened in two days. When it was open, what would she find on the other side? Would life be ever the same again? There had been but little time to think during the last few breathless weeks, but she could not refrain from asking herself these questions every now and then. She leant against the window frame—a slight, but well rounded figure, with a natural grace of its own, and asked these questions of the future. But before she could find an answer Mr. Pemberton came up to her, and said something in his quaint way which brought the laughter back to her eyes; and presently, just as he was chatting pleasantly, the door opened, and a tall man made his way into the room, and across it, straight to where Beatrice was standing, when her whole face lighted up, and woke into vivid animation. A swift interchange of glances, a surreptitious squeeze of a small hand, and then Lord Falconer turned round to give the occupants of the room the benefit of his attention, and if he gave his own, he certainly received a fair share of other people's. Beatrice had rather a haughty way of carrying her little head, which gave her an air of distinction, but Lord Falconer looked as if mankind in general were a carpet for his august foot to tread on. He had a rough, fierce beauty of his own, which singled him out of the common ruck, and was just the style to captivate a girl's fancy at the second glance, if she were not too much alarmed by the first. His imperious will was evidenced by the look in his eyes, as well as by the massive strength of his chin. It would have been altogether a fine face, but for the unrefined mouth hidden under a heavy black moustache. If that moustache had been cut off, Beatrice Kennard would have looked at him once with a shudder, and never again: but he would have consoled himself very soon and very easily, for he was not the sort of man to long for anything which he had much trouble to obtain.

"Your friends have come," Beatrice said in a low voice.

"Yes, so I see," in an indifferent tone; and then eagerly, "Oh, by the bye—those rooms are all right at the Grand, but we are only just in time. You are sure you like Paris?"

"Yes, it will be enchanting," brightly.

"Better than some dull hole where we should have nothing to depend on but ourselves."

"Ye—es," more slowly. "The first time you yawned I should have thought you were bored."

"And there, if we yawn, we can go off to the theatre," with a cheerful laugh, in which she did not join very heartily.

Her face had gone back to its former gravity and her dark eyes had almost a scared look, as she said, "But, Falconer, if I make you yawn at the very beginning, what shall we do long before the end?"

"Oh, that'll be all right," complacently. "We shall get along famously, only we mustn't expect too much of human-nature, you know."

"How d'y'e do, Miss Kennard?" The voice was as pleasant as the frank face to which it belonged, but Beatrice gave a start as she heard it.

"*Hugh!*" she exclaimed in a tone of amazement, as a flush of pleasure rose to her cheeks, and she held out her hand delightedly.

"I thought you weren't coming back for ten years!"

"So did I, but a stroke of luck came to me and I exchanged with another fellow. Tell you all about it some day;" and then he stopped abruptly, for he reflected that his old friend Bee was about to develop into Lady Falconer, and she might not be as accessible as she used to be in the old days.

"Let me introduce you to Lord Falconer," Beatrice said with an exultant look in her eyes. "Captain Pemberton is one of my oldest friends," she added explanatorily to her lover.

The two men shook hands, looked in each other's faces, and hated each other on the spot.

"One of my oldest friends" is rarely a recommendation to a lover, especially when the friend in question happens to be a well-built, good-looking young fellow, possessed of all the attributes that girls are most likely to favour. But there was no jealousy in Falconer's hard unwavering glance, as he took Captain Pemberton's measure. In two days Beatrice was to be his very own, and he knew his own power to keep what once was his; but he was afraid from the first glance that the fellow might become a bore if he gave him any encouragement, so he turned away without the smallest ceremony, merely saying that he must go and speak to that "little Sartoris woman." He had asked permission for a few of his artist friends to come and look at the presents, and Beatrice gave him some cards to fill up with what names he chose. He had only used one, and the girl in the white hat was the product. She had made herself quite at home, chatting cheerfully with Miss Judith, who eyed her as if she were

some mysterious animal whose pranks might be rather disturbing, but who could not help laughing at some of her remarks which were more spicy than those she was accustomed to. Presently Mrs. Sartoris jumped up, for she had caught sight of a man that she knew, and he was a prize not to be lost by a unit amongst a crowd of strangers. They went round the room together making cheap comments on expensive trifles, but she dallied longest at a small round table, spread with many varieties of diamond ornaments. They seemed to have a special attraction for her, as they sparkled and flashed from their blue velvet settings. She had seen nothing like them except in shop windows, and her small soul was filled with envy. Many of them were the bridegroom's gift, and when he joined her, she held up a diamond star in its morocco-case, and looked up into his face with a pout. "Mine that poor Bruin gave me will look nothing after this."

"Make him give you another, then," he rejoined carelessly. "Niobe must have brought in something."

"If it has, he won't spend it on poor me." Then her eyes fell on the tiara which had excited Lady Crosby's admiration. "Miss Kennard is a fortunate girl; I wonder if she appreciates her luck," she said with a sigh of envy.

"She doesn't care for those things as much as you do," he said, glancing at the diamonds.

"Does she care for you?" she asked quickly, looking up into his dark face with a curious look in her eyes.

"Don't talk of her," he said shortly, as he looked across the room where Beatrice was standing, her delicate profile outlined against the moss-green curtain. She seemed for the moment as if she were as far removed from the woman by his side, as if she were at the North Pole. A wide chasm separated them, and yet he had the audacity to reach across and claim her. Sometimes he had the grace to wonder at his own boldness.

"Why not? She is only flesh and blood like the rest of us," Mrs. Sartoris said with an angry laugh. "And I am glad to see that she can amuse herself like the rest of us when you are not on guard by her side." She made the remark because Captain Pemberton was taking every opportunity he could of talking to the old friend whom he was persuaded that he would not see much of in the future. Beatrice's attention was always being claimed by somebody else, but she on her side had a thousand questions to ask him, and she was not willing to

let him slip away. During an interval he asked her what he should give her by way of a remembrance.

She reflected a moment, and then said eagerly, "A racket; mine is done for, and it will remind me of those dear delightful days in the Square."

"You shall have it," he said, highly gratified at her remembrance of the past. He was delighted to find that she did not want to forget it in the face of her brilliant future, and as he looked down into the dark eyes which he had known for most of his life, he wondered how it would have been if he had never gone to India, or had come back three months earlier.

"Let her alone," Lord Falconer said roughly.

"Oh, ta-ta," Mrs. Sartoris answered, with a shrug of her shoulders which brought her exaggerated frills above her ears. "I don't know you in your new character, and I can't say I find you pleasant. Pray don't come to Bloomfield Road until you've gone back to your old one."

She looked over her shoulder, just as she was making her way to the door. "Oh, by-the-bye, tell Miss Kennard I won't interrupt her; but I've enjoyed seeing her presents immensely, and they are too utterly lovely."

"Little vixen!" muttered Falconer, looking after her with a twinkle in his eyes, but not troubling himself to escort her to the door. "I wonder what made her in such an infernal wax."

The room was thinning fast, for most of the people had about half a dozen engagements to make time for before the dawn. James Pemberton walked off arm in arm with his nephew, anxious to hear about this property which had been left him, and to learn if he were going to sell out or not. Aunt Judith leant back in her chair, the society smile no longer on her thin refined face, as she realized the unpleasant fact that before many hours had come and gone, she would be robbed of the girl who had been like the most loving daughter to herself, and the light of her father's house. And there, just at the other end of the room, was the robber. A man whom she feared rather than liked, and that deluded girl was looking up at him as if he were a god. Presently he stooped and kissed her fresh young lips, and Bee actually seemed to like it. They had forgotten the old lady sitting in the corner, or else they thought that Aunt Judy was as good as nobody, which she might take as a high com-

pliment, for it is far better for the old and the middle-aged than the chance of being taken for a chaperoning nuisance.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### A BRIDE WITHOUT A PAST.

BEATRICE KENNARD was sitting close to her aunt on a low chair, putting the last stitches into a fleecy white shawl which was intended for Miss Judith's thin shoulders when summer chilled into autumn. It had been a long time about, taken up at odd moments, and laid down for many weeks; but to-day it was to be finished, like the days of her girlhood. At this hour to-morrow she would be a married woman; and this was their last day together. They had been very good comrades these two, the elder had made full allowance for youth and high spirits, the younger had always come to the elder for the sympathy which her father was often too busy to give her. And Miss Judith's sympathy was boundless; neither the sad nor the silly could exhaust it. She was no animated piece of putty, however, ready to respond to every impression. Anything savouring of meanness found her hard as adamant; but her niece had never tried her in that way. She was a generous-minded impulsive girl, who generally got into scrapes through her ready confidence in others; and when she sinned she paid for all the small sins of a thoughtless girlhood, with a swift repentance, which always brought prompt absolution from her aunt. Nobody except dear old Aunt Judy guessed how sensitive she was, for she hid her wounded feelings under a cloak of silent reserve and made no outward fuss about them. Her father was devoted to his work as a parish-priest, and had plenty of love, but very little time to give to his daughter; so that Beatrice would probably have been thrown back upon herself, her girlish spontaneity checked in infancy would never have been likely to recover itself if Miss Judith Kennard had not taken up her abode in her brother's house soon after the death of her sister-in-law. She took the motherless child at once into the warmest corner of her heart, and there she had kept her ever since. When the child grew into an unusually pretty girl, it was a delight to her to see the admiring glances that followed her as they drove about the streets or walked in the Row. She chaperoned her to one dance after another,

and made herself agreeable to all the men that came about the house, but she watched each in turn with the suspicious eye of a sentinel, lest he should be the one to steal her treasure. She fancied that she was very sharp about that sort of thing; but as the man who carries the death-dealing bomb is generally allowed to pass on scot-free, whilst the innocent passer-by with a handbox is arrested, she kept her knowing eye on a fair-haired curate who seemed to her the nicest specimen in the whole collection, gave a casual glance to a lively young Treasury-clerk who always made Beatrice laugh with his fine attempts at wit, and never gave a thought to the black-haired giant who dropped in now and then, but often sat in his chair without a word.

When Beatrice came to tell her that Lord Falconer had proposed to her and she had accepted him, and that, moreover, she was the happiest girl in the world, the poor old lady felt as if she had received a thundering blow on the top of her head. She took off her spectacles and wiped them with fingers that shook, but "never a word said she." "Auntie. don't you congratulate me?" cried the girl, anxious for the sympathy that never failed her in her new and wonderful joy.

"You are joking with me—you are taking me in—go away with you," she said feebly with an attempt at playfulness.

But it was no use; the girl's radiant face told its own tale in language that must be true; and as she kissed her, and blessed her, her heart was sinking lower and lower. If it had only been any other man than that!

It was greatly to her credit that she never said one word against him during all the weeks that followed; but with the inconsistency of a true woman she took an absolute dislike to the Willoughbys, who had invited them to a dinner at Richmond where they had first met Lord Falconer. She was convinced that if it had not been for that dinner at the Star and Garter, followed by that saunter in the star-lit gardens where nobody could chaperone anybody, and where the glowing tips of countless cigars seemed to match in number the bright stars above, this misfortune would never have come about. Nothing would induce her to go to Richmond again. She had always some excuse ready, the drive was too long, or she thought there was going to be a thunderstorm; and as she was generally ready to do anything that was asked of her, Beatrice never canvassed these objections. But

the mischief was done. Poor Aunt Judy bore up very well and tried to look as if she were glad to see him whenever he came in, but Lord Falconer was perfectly aware of her dislike. It amused him rather than not, and he made up for it on his own side by disliking his future father-in-law. The Rev. Edward Kennard was only a parish priest, Rector of a West End parish, when he told him that he wanted to marry his daughter. It was nothing to him that Mr. Kennard was an eloquent preacher, a clever writer, a man of great repute amongst the theologians of the day. He had no interest in theology, which he considered the province of all clerics because they were bound to understand it, and of most women because they were sure to know nothing about it. And women he fancied always enjoyed what they did not understand, whilst men enjoyed nothing that did not appeal to their reason. Anyhow he considered that a parson ought to jump at his offer, and he was annoyed with the Rector for not doing so. Mr. Kennard gave his consent most reluctantly, but he could find no actual, substantial reason for withholding it; and Lord Falconer owed him a grudge for his reluctance though he showed no outward sign of it. Still he was so much in love with Beatrice that he gave in readily to all the Rector's conditions, knowing that he should do what he chose when he had won her for his wife. To get her was the great thing; the conditions were mere cobwebs which he could break through whenever he liked.

Beatrice and Miss Judith did not talk much. It seemed as if they had so very much to say that they did not know where to begin. Everything was finished; no more trying on of hats or frocks, no more untying of parcels, because all the presents had come except Captain Pemberton's. As they were sitting there it was brought in, and Beatrice received it with a smile of pleasure. It was an unexceptional racket by the best maker, and on the handle was a silver band with a bee under a coronet engraved upon it. "I am so glad that he has put a bee instead of a prosaic F," she said as she studied it closely.

"Are you? I am almost sorry that it is not an F," the old lady said gently. "It would be fitter for a staid married woman."

"But I shan't be old, Auntie; I shall still be a girl in spite of a husband, a coronet, and a carriage of my own." The tears were in her large eyes, but she kept them back, and talked on as if afraid any longer of silence. "*Your* girl, you know; you shan't give me up.

I shall want you just as much as ever, and you couldn't get a new cap without me, you know you couldn't."

"I shall learn to be very independent," drawing herself up in fun, though her poor old lips were trembling. "I shall have Edward all to myself, with no one to interfere, and—and I shall be very glad to be alone sometimes."

"Auntie, you are the wretchedest humbug I ever knew," Beatrice exclaimed as she threw down her racket, and taking one of Miss Judith's hands in hers stroked it lovingly. "There is never any use in attempting it, so you had better give it up. If you don't miss me it will be because you see too much of me. Falconer will be out a good deal—men always are—and then I shall come and take you for a drive in my own Victoria." And so she went on building one castle in the air after another, in the vain attempt to induce her Aunt to look upon her marriage as a great and enduring good, instead of an unmitigated evil. She had won her back to cheerfulness with infinite pains by the time their visitors arrived. These consisted of her uncle and aunt, Colonel and Mrs. Wentworth, and their ward Flora Vivian, the orphaned daughter of an old brother-officer.

The Colonel was short, stout and fussy, with a great idea of his own importance in which few other people shared. His wife was a bland woman who was chiefly remarkable for wearing handsome mantles. Her husband looked upon her as an important piece of furniture, without which his rooms would seem rather empty, for she had no more personality than an arm-chair, and she was as lymphatic as a cow. In direct contrast to both of them, Flo was brimming over with life and intelligence. Her auburn hair, which is not meant to be a euphuistic way of expressing "carrots," was the most appropriate frame for a piquant face, with sparkling eyes and cherubic mouth. The two girls were great allies, and the newly-arrived Flo dragged Bee at once into a corner, eager to get answers to all the questions she was dying to ask.

"Come and look at the presents,"

"Oh I can see them afterwards," with a careless glance at a table which was crowded with salt-cellars and tea-pots. "But tell me about *him*. Is he too awfully nice?" Beatrice laughed, and said Flo would see him later on, for he was coming to dinner to be trotted out before her scanty number of belongings.

And then, quick as a fire-fly, an insect that she rather resembled,

Flo darted off to another subject, and exclaimed "Isn't it delightful Uncle Ned being made Bishop of St. Christopher's? The palace, you know, is only a mile from us, so that when you are down there we can meet fifty times a day."

"And when I am not down there, you will be flirting with all the ordination candidates, and distracting them from their studies," Beatrice suggested out of her knowledge of human nature.

"Not I—mere boys—nothing but an Archdeacon would suit me—I would rather like an Archdeacon," she said meditatively.

"Why?" with a restless glance towards the door, for this was just about the hour at which Bee expected her lover. "He would probably be old enough to be your father."

"Yes, but then I could ask him what he really was, and no one can ever tell me. There's something as indefinite about an Archdeacon as a dodo, but at least he's not extinct. Bee, is Lord Falconer good at answering questions?" with solemnity as if the answer were of great importance.

"I shouldn't say that he was," with a little laugh as her mind flew back to his usual style of conversation.

"Then I am very glad that I am not going to marry him," said the grave philosopher of seventeen.

"So am I," Beatrice answered with her head out of the window as a hansom drew up at the door, and the pride of anticipatory possession in her heart, "but I don't regard a husband as a dictionary."

Then Lord Falconer came in and at once became the centre of attraction. He always looked too large for any room that was not of absolutely palatial proportions. Following his own inclinations, according to his invariable rule, he came up to the window where the two girls were standing, answered the look in Beatrice's eyes with one quite as tender in his own, as he pressed her hand, and said "How d'ye do?" to Flora without waiting to be introduced.

"You and Beatrice are great chums I know," he said cordially as he mentally summed her up as a jolly little girl with plenty of go, "and I hope you will take me into partnership. Won't do to leave me out in the cold."

"No, indeed, Lord Falconer," blushing with unusual shyness under the steady gaze of a man who always prolonged a glance which seemed oppressive to the recipient.

## CHAPTER IV.

## MARRIED.

THE wedding was over, and Beatrice Kennard had developed into the Countess of Falconer, wife of a peer of the realm. James Pemberton looked on with an amused but cynical eye as he stood in the Kennards' drawing-room. He had never seen two such sets of antagonistic opposites collected under the same roof in the whole course of his varied experience. The Bishop had always mixed in what goes by the name of "good society." His friends were generally well-born and equally well-bred, pleasant, cultivated people who pursued their various careers with enough dignity, and with no conscious dullness; whilst the bridegroom belonged by predilection to what is called the "smart set" by the society-papers. Their great object was to be up to date in everything, dress, conversation, manners, and even religion. The women went to church in frocks of the newest cut, with gardens in their hats, and hugest of puffs on their sleeves, and listened to some fashionable preacher, in order to cut him up with trenchant wit half-an-hour later at the Church Parade in the Park. The men affected always to be in the highest spirits, apt to grow rowdy when wanting to be really cheerful, and quoted coster songs when they wished to be extra facetious. They got on very well with girls of their own set, and embarked as easily in flirtation as a spider on his thread. They lived, they eat, and if to-morrow they had to die that was double reason why they should enjoy themselves to-day. To-day was everything to them, as it is to the butterfly, and they made the most of it in their own light-hearted fashion. They had no reverence for anything on earth except their own words of honour, and could crack a risky joke under the Bishop's nose without the slightest blush to do proxy for an apology. A happy-go-lucky set, with laughter in their eyes, and light words on their lips, and many a real tragedy in their lives covered up from the word by a mask of comedy.

Flora Vivian stood on the outskirts of the steady set. Val Forrester hung on to the rear-guard of the other division. The girl was too full of fun—real girlish fun—to feel quite in correspondence with her own more sober environment, whilst the boy was as yet too fresh and too unspoilt to be quite at his ease with his

more experienced associates. They came together by the force of circumstances, and fraternised over a scrap of wedding-cake, and a glass of claret, which Forrester had procured for her at the expense of much muscular strength. An inexperienced looker-on who had never been at a London ball, and seen the rush for the supper-room, as soon as its doors were open, would have wondered why all these people who had evidently spent so much money on dress-makers and tailors, had nothing to expend on their food. For he would have thought that they were all very near starvation when he saw how they fought their way to the refreshment-table, over the patent leathered toe of the male, or the delicate chiffon frill of the fairer sex. There was plenty to eat or drink for there was nothing niggardly in Miss Judith's arrangements, but the difficulty was to get at it. The crush was tremendous, the heat suffocating, and Val Forrester fairly mopped his pink and white face, when he had captured that small amount of food, and brought it to the quiet corner in which Flo was waiting for him.

Hugh Pemberton, who had known her all her life, burst out laughing at the expression of her face, when she saw that little bit of almond and plum cake stranded in the centre of a dinner-plate with a wide margin of emptiness all round.

"Thanks ever so much," she murmured, trying to forget her unromantic appetite, which was asserting itself now that it was inconvenient, after deserting her entirely at the hurried luncheon which had been provided earlier in the day. "Feelings" had been too much for her then, but now she could have eaten anything!

"Lavish gratitude for small mercies," remarked Hugh. "A currant and a bit of sugar to keep off starvation."

"Lazy beggar—go and do better yourself," exclaimed Forrester wrathfully. "It's easy to look on and grumble. I nearly lost my coat as it was—and I thought my eye-lashes would go next; and not a soul in that crowd will ever speak to me again," he added ruefully, "for I've trodden ruthlessly on every woman's gown, and"—

"No wonder, you took so long; Miss Vivian is ready for more"—mischievously.

Forrester gave a despairing sigh, and then his face brightened. "Couldn't I run down to the kitchen? I shouldn't mind facing twenty cooks. They wouldn't be half so rough!"

"I know a better plan," Flora said, her wits sharpened by her

hunger. "There was a very good luncheon in the library, and nobody ate anything. Let us go and see if it is cleared away."

The motion was carried nem. con. and the three stole stealthily across the hall into the now deserted library. Beatrice looking round a moment later, wondered what had become of them.

She was in the middle of the eager chattering crowd close by her husband's side, and as everybody allowed, they were a striking pair—with more than an ordinary share of beauty between them.

"Made for each other," exclaimed an old dowager, whose stock phrase it was at every wedding. James Pemberton's lip curled disdainfully. "Yes, made for him as a porcelain vase for a pork-shop millionaire. He can pay for it—and he can break it when he chooses," he soliloquised.

"My dear Bishop, I just want two words with you," and Mrs. Wentworth's cousin, Mrs. Godfrey Vivian, who considered herself a connection, and desired to advertise the claim, now that the Kennards were really becoming people whom it was an advantage to know—laid a plump, much betinged hand on his coat-sleeve. "Have you seen the review of your delightful book in the 'Religious Expositor'?"

"No. What do they say? Give it me pretty hot, I expect," his face kindling with interest.

"Oh it's too shameful—cuts it up in a most scandalous fashion. I never read anything half so spiteful," with uplifted hands.

"Excellent, my dear Mrs. Vivian," the Bishop said, with his ready smile, "to be abused by the 'Religious Expositor' is the highest compliment they can pay me."

"But they say that it is written by a fool," looking bewildered. "Fancy calling a Bishop a fool! I am sure it borders on sacrilege. I should indict them for libel."

"Run up their circulation—and empty my pockets. No, thank you; we are all fools to those who don't understand us, and some of us are fools to those who know us best. That is the saddest thing." His face was very grave and she feared lest she might have offended him; but when she began to apologise, he stopped her at once. "The Expositor neither knows nor understands me, so it is all right, and I'm much obliged to you. Let me get you an ice."

The bride meanwhile had slipped away from her laughing throng.

of bridesmaids, and was divesting herself of her finery in the quiet of her own room.

There was a newly engaged maid somewhere about, but she was not allowed to begin her duties just yet. Only Aunt Judy, who sat on an ottoman in new grey silk dress and white lace shawl, watching with loving eyes, and Flo who had detached herself from her surreptitious luncheon directly she heard the rustle of the bride's dress on the stairs, and the upper housemaid who for many years had waited on her young mistress, were admitted within that door.

Beatrice's lips were tremulous, and a soft pink came and went in her usually white cheeks, but she was keeping up bravely for the sake of the old lady, whose tears she knew to be very near the surface. All the day she seemed to have been acting like an automaton with no conscious cerebration, except when she and Flo had run out in their waterproofs to an early Celebration, at what, only a short time before, had been her father's church, just round the corner. The Bishop celebrated, and many members of the congregation noticed that his voice was very unlike his own as he conducted the service. The lightning flashed in weird gleams of colour through the painted windows, the thunder rolled like the threatening roar of an enemy's guns, and the rain came down in torrents as if to wash away all stains. With all his heart he prayed for a blessing on that young life, starting on its new road that day. There in that quiet church, which seemed all the more quiet because of the storm outside, where no interruption could come to him, and where the incessant calls of business might be forgotten, his daughter's marriage came upon him with the shock of a new idea. A great fear seized him, and yet he was not the sort of man to admit the torment of a doubt when he had once decided. Whether it was that the storm affected his nerves against his will, he could not tell, but he felt under the influence of a strange instinct which had an authoritative power over him. He hurried up to the two girls as they stood in the porch, waiting for him, as they leisurely opened their umbrellas. He laid his hand on Beatrice's shoulder and looked straight into her dark eyes.

"My child, are you sure of him?" he said very earnestly.

A look of surprise came over her face, which changed into a happy smile.

"Yes, daddy dear, as sure as I am of you," she said simply, but with unbounded confidence.

Still he hesitated, whilst Flora walked on ahead picking her way carefully over the puddles. "If you have the slightest misgiving—never mind the fuss—remember what you do to-day is irrevocable, and for God's sake speak in time."

She was surprised at the agitation in his face as well as in his voice. It was so unlike her firm, resolute father to be so moved, but surprised as she was, she was not in the least shaken. "I'd rather give up my life," she said quietly, but in a tone that came straight from her heart. "Look, the storm is over and the sun is coming out. Isn't that a good omen?" she added joyously, as she linked her arm in his.

\* \* \* \*

The sun kept out all the rest of the morning, and it was pouring in at the windows now in a golden flood as she put on her large hat with the plumes of creamy feathers, and then she turned to Aunt Judy and felt that the worst trial was to come. She knelt down on the floor before her, unmindful of the new white frock with its golden embroideries and chiffon trimmings, and drew the frail figure towards her in her strong young arms.

"Not good bye, Auntie."

"Oh, my dear," in a choked voice.

That was all, as these two good friends parted—one going out, the other left behind.

(To be continued.)

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## A Diplomatic Debut.

By WALTER RICHARDS,

Author of "GEORGE TALBOT'S PROMISE," "UNDER THE CEDAR," etc.

### CHAPTER I.

THERE was a state ball at the Grand Ducal Palace, and Hugh Adair, a recently appointed Attaché of the British Embassy, was there as in duty bound. He was considered an undoubted acquisition to the *monde ou l'on s'amuse*, and not without reason, as he was good looking, aristocratic, passably rich, and endowed with an imperturbable sangfroid and audacity, which women without exception pronounced absolutely delightful. In addition to this he was ambitious—a fact known only to himself, and rather romantic—a fact which he would not have admitted for worlds.

He was anxious to exchange a few words with one of his colleagues, and was accordingly waiting in a sort of palm-decked arbour in the vestibule. It is amusing for a time watching people pass, and contrasting their characteristics and scraps of conversation, but he was beginning to find it pall, when the entry of Baron de Morat revived his flagging interest. The Baron was perhaps the best known personage in the capital. He was a French ex-financier of colossal wealth but doubtful origin, whose ingots procured him the entrée everywhere, and whose rôle in life seemed to be that of a rather malevolent Monte Christo. Just at present, too, he was more talked about than usual, as he was on the point of espousing a beautiful young Austrian girl, the Countess von Kronberg, the only daughter of a nobleman, the length of whose pedigree, which was bewildering, was as well known as the excessive tenuity of his purse.

As De Morat entered, Adair noticed he dropped a handkerchief, which was picked up and returned to him with a profound bow by one of the footmen. The Baron seemed surprised, smiled, said a few words in a low tone, and passed on. At that moment Von Kronberg and his daughter arrived, and Adair watched the meeting with interest.

"Good Heavens! what a lovely girl!" he muttered to himself, "but how pale!"

Josephine von Kronberg was pale indeed, and in the passionless, high-bred face, Adair fancied he detected an utter weariness, even, as her fiancé approached, a look of intense repugnance. De Morat made his salutations with an *empressement* which caused the young Englishman to ejaculate "cad," and with an air of complacent proprietorship which elicited the further monosyllable "brute!"

Short though the greeting was, Adair noticed that the Frenchman twice let his eyes wander from the proud, peerless face of his promised bride to the vulgar, Sclavonic countenance of the gorgeous footman who had returned him his handkerchief. Then the group passed on, and, to the Attaché's infinite relief, his friend Villiers at last arrived, and the two young men entered the magnificent drawing-room.

"Do you know the Von Kronbergs, Villiers?" asked Adair.

"Rather. The old General was a great friend of my father. They came together in the war of sixty-six."

"I should like to know him. Will you introduce me?"

"Of course. Come along; I want to speak to him."

Adair had a way of getting on with people—if he wanted to, and before long he and the General were on the best of terms. Presently, Josephine appeared with De Morat, and he fancied that Von Kronberg's good-humoured face lost a little of its careless gaiety. The necessary introductions being effected, Adair asked the Countess for a dance. De Morat glared.

"The Countess has been complaining of fatigue," he said with a sort of snarling smile.

"I am sorry," rejoined Adair blandly. "The Countess is much to be pitied. But perhaps she will be rested later on."

A faint smile on the beautiful face encouraged him to pursue his advantage.

"Permit me," he said to Josephine, taking her programme. "May I have the sixth valse? The sixth is a good number, don't you think, M. le Baron," he added, looking calmly at the Frenchman. He had intended his polite persiflage to be annoying, but he was certainly unprepared for its effect. De Morat started, bit his lips, changed colour and looked at Adair with an expression of mingled fury and anxiety. The Attaché's insouciant smile seemed

to reassure him, and with some well turned compliment to Josephine he began talking to Von Kronberg.

Adair returned the card to the Countess.

"Thank you," she said, and as their eyes met he felt sure that the conventional words had reference to the little verbal passage of arms between himself and the great De Morat. It seemed, too, to him as though, involuntarily, those glorious eyes had given another message, a message of misery and proud entreaty, and maiden fancy springing unbidden into hopeless life.

He had plenty of acquaintances at the ball, and chatted and flirted as gaily as was his wont, yet all the time in his heart, side by side with a strange perplexity about De Morat, was a new, sweet, bewildering feeling, kindled into being by the mute, pathetic eloquence of those mournful, violet eyes. It is, therefore, not much to be wondered at that before very long the pretty inanities of ball-room talk began to grate on him, and espying a deserted conservatory he betook himself there to ponder—so he insisted to himself—on *l'affaire De Morat*.

But as it happened the conservatory was not deserted. On a couch at the farther end a girl had flung herself, her head buried in her hands, and by her stood an elderly man, whose handsome, soldierly face was clouded with despair and self reproach.

"Josephine—my darling! this must not be. Your happiness shall not be sacrificed thus. I will defy him and take the consequences."

The pale face lifted and looked at the speaker with a wan smile of infinite tenderness.

"Hush! father dear. It must and shall be. I am foolish to-night. Perhaps—in time—I shall hate him less. Besides, there is no escape."

If there was the faintest suggestion of a query in the last words, the tiny hope it implied was soon crushed.

"Absolutely none, so far as I am concerned. The man stands too well. Were there even a shade of suspicion against him it would be different. But for all that you shall not suffer, my darling."

"I am resolved, dear; and, remember, it is my doing, not yours. Come. I'm going to be quite brave: *we* don't flinch, you know, even though the peril is a—De Morat," and with a piteous assumption of cheerfulness, Josephine rose, kissed her father's troubled brow,

and passed out on his arm, proud and regal and beautiful—but with a breaking heart.

## CHAPTER II.

WHEN Adair re-entered the ball-room after his involuntary eaves-dropping, he saw Von Kronberg and his daughter talking to young St. Foix, Secretary to the French Legation. On leaving them the latter joined his English confrère.

"*N'est ce pas qu'elle est belle, mon cher?*" he exclaimed enthusiastically.

"*Belle en faire ravir,*" replied Adair smiling. "Another victory for France, Vicomte. *On dit* that your De Morat has won the prize."

"Oh yes," said St. Foix gaily, "but I am afraid, *malheureusement*, that la grande nation cannot claim the honour of owning the estimable Baron. He's Swiss, I fancy."

"Happy Switzerland!" laughed Adair, and went off to claim his dance with the Countess, who was sufficiently "rested" to fulfil her engagement, and the Attaché led her off in triumph, profoundly regardless of the ill-concealed annoyance of De Morat. By adroit manœuvring Adair arranged, that when they ceased dancing, they found themselves close to the memorable conservatory, from which an effective *coup d'œil* of the room was obtained.

"What the newspapers will describe as a veritable fairyland," he remarked. "Your countrymen have a wonderful eye for effect."

Josephine smiled, but the smile died quickly away. She had enjoyed the dance, and for the time had forgotten De Morat, but the proximity of the conservatory brought back the wretched realities of life again.

"Apropos of fairyland," went on Adair, "what a pity it is that fairies and genii and benevolent enchanters are things of the past."

"It is indeed." There was an earnest ring in the common-place answer, which touched the Attaché to the heart.

"Yes; one of the latter would have a busy time of it. How we should all rush to him, and how grateful we should all be if, for example, he would 'confound our enemies,' or give us the boon we value most."

"Grateful indeed! Such an enchanter could scarcely ask too much."

For a moment the idea was reality to the girl. What would she

not give to the heaven-sent magician who would rid her of De Morat with safety to her father!

"I'm glad to hear you say that, Countess; if ever I turn wizard, I shall be sure of one grateful client. Shall we have another turn? Perhaps the divine afflatus may seize me during the waltz."

His tone was light, and his words merry nonsense, and yet there was something in both which caused Josephine's great violet eyes to give a quick enquiring glance at his face.

"I certainly will not baulk so excellent an aspiration," she said. "If you *do* become so delightfully endowed, you must consider me as having the first claim on your powers."

"Yes; I promise you that faithfully, but perhaps I shall be terribly exigent in asking my reward." Try as he would, he could not prevent his voice shaking a little as he said the last word, and Josephine choked a sigh. How foolish it all was! this talking themselves into a half belief in a wild, childish story-book impossibility! Well, well, most of us have realized of some fair air-built castle, that—

"It was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight."

Meanwhile a few more turns of the dance, and then—reality and De Morat.

Adair left the Palace after that dance. He was going, he said laughingly to the countess, to study incantations forthwith.

"There'll be an awful row," he remarked to himself as he drove away, "and I may as well apply for indefinite leave at once. It's a comfort the brute's not French though. But it will give Von Kronberg a chance and perhaps save my beauty. If this doesn't answer we'll try something else. And now for Monsieur The Chief of Police!"

His carriage had stopped at the office of the functionary he had just named, who, he knew, had left the Palace only a few minutes before himself. The appearance at so unusual an hour of the English attaché caused some excitement in the Bureau, which was not lessened by the mysterious official gravity which Adair assumed. His interview with the Chief of Police was lengthy, and only the concluding words were caught by the officials in attendance.

"It is important, Herr Baron, that at present my name and that of my Government be kept in the back-ground. You had better,

too, communicate with me privately and not officially. I presume you will act at once?"

The Chief smiled: "M. le Baron will have his *déjeuner à la surprise* in four hours from now. We are deeply indebted to monsieur for his information." Adair bowed, smiled discreetly, murmured something vague about "dispatches," "extensive ramifications," and "interests to be conciliated," and devoutly trusting that the potent official he was addressing would discover some meaning in his explanations, took his leave.

By noon the town was in a state of intense excitement, shared in later in the day by all the European capitals. A well-known millionaire had been arrested for complicity with a nihilist plot of the most dastardly description; the evidence was said to be overwhelming, and the Grand Ducal police were held up to their brethren in other countries as models of knowledge and astuteness.

That afternoon the Chief called at the British Embassy and saw Adair.

"I'm in for it now!" remarked that gentleman *sotto voce*; "he's been deuced quick though; I quite calculated on two days before he would be able to report the 'rumours implicating the esteemed and magnificent De Morat to be absolutely without foundation.' Delighted to see you, Herr Baron."

The Herr Baron's reply was an ecstatic embrace. "Ah, my dear M. Adair! What a triumph! What skill! What consummate finesse! To think that we have him at last, this never-to-be-sufficiently-cursed Schliemann!"

Adair smiled. His first impression was that the awful blunder had driven the unlucky Chief out of his mind; his next that he was perpetrating a grim, retaliatory hoax, preparatory to overwhelming him with abuse. In either event to smile was the best thing to do, and it came easiest.

"I suppose I must not ask how you found it out, eh, cunning one? Ah, you English! So careless and debonnaire. Everything 'a deuced bore,' eh? And all the time a young attaché has quietly discovered the identity of the millionaire De Morat with the anarchist Schliemann, and one fine day communicates with the police, and the *schelm* is arrested with a cipher communication upon him enough to hang a thousand men! Ah, you are a marvel, M. Adair! A marvel!"

And when Adair had, with a quiet smile and modest disclaimer of the preternatural wisdom ascribed to him, bade farewell to his visitor, he began to agree with him.

"By Jove! I *am* a marvel—in the way of luck. I wanted to give that dear girl a chance by crying 'wolf' after that brute of a baron—and he turns out to be a real wolf with a vengeance. I suppose that footman was an accomplice and gave him the cipher—and my innocent reference to 'six' being a good number must have accidentally touched on one of their infernal secrets. I must try to bear my blushing honours becomingly. My faith! if they *don't* blush they ought to!"

Hugh Adair's rise in the diplomatic service was prompt and speedy. He is, indeed, already spoken of as the probable ambassador at a certain important Court—not the least of his recommendations being the acknowledged charm and beauty of his wife, *née* the Countess von Kronberg, whose father, it will be remembered, was victimized by the notorious Schliemann when posing as a millionaire, by an impudent and wholly fictitious charge of financial irregularities. The Countess to this day declares that her husband won her hand as his reward for a piece of "White Magic"; Adair, however, demurely refers to the incident in question as his "Diplomatic Debut."

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## The Body at Number Five.

By BARRETT KNOX,

Author of "ROBERT TRENT'S DREAM," "HAVRE AND ITS  
ENVIRONS," "CATCHING A TARTAR," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER I.

"CAN it be only eight months since your return from India, Scrip? How much has happened to us in that short time!"

"Speak for yourself, man," answered my friend, "my life has been quiet enough."

"Perhaps. But you are always so aggravatingly calm. Most people would have shewn some interest about returning home, especially when they come back with the riches of Croesus and the strength of a buffalo. You have developed neither a liver nor a temper, in fact, you are as cool as if you had been on an Arctic Expedition."

"You are hot enough for us both, Ted. If I were as excitable, who would have arranged all your business details lately? I believe you would have arrived in Scotland next week, minus luggage, licence and ring! Your head was turned long ago, and now you have lost your heart, leaving nothing but six foot four of body to make up for all deficiencies. Remember Ajax, and take warning.

' His body held vast room for entertainment,  
And lower parts maintained their offices,  
Only the garret, his exalted head,  
Useless for wise recipe, was filled with lumber '

and so is yours!"

"No, it is *not*" I reply firmly. "It is filled with happiness. You may smile in that aggravatingly superior manner, but I don't believe you are a bit happier or wiser than the rest of us. You can give me no proof of what you profess, whereas I have given you ocular demonstration of the source of my happiness, past and present. Ethel is too beautiful not to win even your admiration, and if you

knew her mind as I do, you would own that her beauty runs through body, soul and spirit."

Scrip nodded appreciatively, but said no more—and for a while we both smoked away in "companionable silence." It was past nine o'clock. We had been busy with packing all day, and purposed starting for Scotland the next evening. I could hardly realize that the long wished for time had arrived, and that I, Edgar Hyde, artist, owner of an old dilapidated estate, with an equally dilapidated income, was in one month's time to marry the only daughter and heiress of Sir John Keel of Arrowmore!

Paul Solley, familiarly called P.S. or "Scrip," was to be my best man, and was included with me in kind old Sir John's invitation to Scotland. The shooting attracted Paul; Ethel and the scenery attracted me, and we looked forward to a delightful month together. I went off into a long reverie and only came back to realities on finding that my pipe was out. Half-an-hour passed, and my conscience smote me for being such a dull companion, and some fiend suggested, "Talk of something that interests Paul." I glanced at my friend; he was in a "brown study" and I knew quite well where his thoughts were roaming.

Paul had returned from India a thorough mystic, and when mounted on his hobby horse, would gallop away over the intricate course of Buddhist philosophy, leaving me in a state of bewilderment. I did not attempt to follow, when he talked impressively about "electric affinities," "astral bodies," etc., etc. I did not scoff at his creed, but simply maintained, that when I *saw* his astral body quit his material body, I should then believe he could do what at present he had only shewn me he could talk about. If I had only known! wild horses should not have torn the words from me that I next proceeded to utter.

"Paul, you have often promised to give me some proof of your supernatural powers. I wish you would gratify my curiosity to-night. I am sure you would be far cooler in your astral body than you are at present. This heat is simply unbearable!"

Paul gazed at me with his usual quietness, but his piercing eyes glowed in the dusk, as he answered—

"I have leave to grant your wish, but I fear you will repent having uttered it. I am called, but on what errand I know not, nor when I shall return."

"Oh! That won't do at all, old fellow, you must only go a short trip, for we must start by to-morrow night's limited mail. What reason could I give to Ethel, if you did not turn up with me?" Paul did not reply, and fearing that I had hurt his feelings by so bluntly refusing his offer, I hastened to add—

"It's awfully good of you to grant such a wild whim of mine, but don't bother about it now. We have all those painting things to pack still. Shall we see to them to-night or wait till to-morrow morning?" Paul did not answer. I looked anxiously at him, and as I moved, the light from the lamp fell upon his face. Deathly pale, with closed eyes, he looked so ill; I hastily exclaimed, "What's wrong?" He made no reply. I seized his hand, it felt limp and nerveless, and dropped heavily from my grasp. My first idea was that he had fainted, and wheeling the chair to the centre table, I poured water over his face, first a little, then a deluge: no signs of returning consciousness! After several minutes it dawned upon me, that my friend's astral body *had* departed, leaving me the custody of his inanimate form. This was interesting, very. I watched him for some time, he did not even appear to breathe. I stepped out on the balcony and gazed around, down the street, along my neighbours' balconies, and finally I scrutinised the sky, but no astral body of Mr. Paul Solley could be seen. Hearing a noise inside the room, I hurried back, and beheld the portly form of Mrs. Green, my landlady. "Beg pardon, sir, I knocked; you wished to see me about giving up your rooms?"

"Yes, yes, Mrs. Green, certainly," I replied, hastily stepping between her and Paul. "But I think I would rather settle with you to-morrow about the rooms; I may want to keep them on. I will pay you up to the end of our present agreement. Here is the money."

"Thank you, sir. I only hope you will remain, for you are a good tenant to me. I will just sign the receipt. May I use your pen, sir?" Before I could stop her, she stepped aside to the writing table, signed the receipt, and turning round, caught sight of my friend.

"Good gracious, sir! What's the matter with Mr. Solley? He's as grey as my white cat! Is he ill?"

"I don't think he *is* very well," I stammered. "Do you think it is a sort of seizure, or faint? I have tried cold water, but it didn't do any good."

"Well, sir, for mercy's sake don't let him lie there. Here, help me put him on the sofa. 'Tis a faint, you may depend upon it, and the head should be kept low, and burnt feathers held to the nose."

The wretched woman! She seemed quite pleasantly excited.

"Here, Sarah!" running to the door and calling the general servant, "bring that old feather broom from the best front room."

Sarah appeared only too quickly, and energetic Mrs. Green first held the broom over the lamp until the smell of burning quills almost sent my spirit after Solley's, and then waved the smoking quills over Paul's face. No result. Mrs. Green suggested all kinds of useless remedies, ending with "Shall we fetch a doctor?"

This offer I firmly declined, saying also that I knew my friend was subject to these attacks, and that I was sure quiet was essential, that I could bring him round if they would kindly leave the room, etc., etc.

I succeeded at last in getting rid of mistress and maid. I then locked the door, and sat down by the sofa, waiting as calmly as might be for the return of my wandering friend. One hour passed, succeeded by a second.

Could I go to Scotland and leave Solley to follow me? How explain his absence? When would he return? etc., etc.

At last I fell asleep.

For some hours all was still. Then little curls of thin blue smoke might have been seen creeping under the door and through the boards. Thicker and thicker grew the air, the lamp burned dim, and I awoke with a start to hear that terrible cry of "Fire!"

I rushed to the door where Mrs. Green stood, thumping upon the panels, unlocked it, and feeling thankful that my rooms were on the ground floor, with only a flight of stone steps to descend into the street, I seized Paul's body and hurried out, leaving the fireman to rescue our luggage. Oh! Sally! Sally! why did you thrust that luckless feather broom into your housemaid's cupboard, while it was yet smouldering, amongst all the combustibles most suited for a conflagration, paper, firewood, matches, lamps and oily rags. In less than an hour the house was gutted, and much damage done to the dwellings on either side.

"Well, sir," exclaimed Mrs. Green, coming up to me as I sat supporting Paul upon a pile of furniture on the opposite pavement, "Well, sir, it's a mercy my best house is the other side of the

street, and only just done up ready for letting (t'other one is well insured.) You'd best come in right away. Has the poor gentleman fainted again? No wonder! Here, bring him in."

Assisted by the policeman, we carried my friend's body into No. 5 and laid it upon a sofa.

"Was the gentlemen hurt or ill?" enquired the man. Mrs. Green saved me a reply.

"Oh, no, not hurt, he was ill and had fainted again from the smoke; he will soon come round."

I devoutly hoped he would, and meanwhile despatched both landlady and policeman after my belongings, and during their absence removed Paul to the bedroom.

Some hours passed, our excited neighbours had departed, and only a few people still watched the ruins of the smouldering house. Mrs. Green had brought me some breakfast, aided by the repentant and abject Sarah, whose face was still glazed with bitter tears. I had sent off a telegram to Scotland—

"Cannot start till Monday. Solley detained by business."

But as the day passed I began to feel distinctly exasperated with my friend. I felt it would not do to explain, or attempt to explain, matters to Mrs. Green. She would never understand. In fact, no one could understand. Paul would be supposed to be in a trance, and his body would be carefully watched and reported upon by the doctors! I knew such a proceeding would be quite contrary to his wishes.

My painting materials had been drenched with water, and it took me some hours to dry and sort them. The sketching tent was soaked, so I set it up and dried the canvasses and brushes. I had had one large case made to hold all my paraphernalia. It rather resembled a coffin, but was mightily convenient, though the porters grumbled somewhat, and also the hotel servants, at its unusual dimensions.

I had not received my regular daily letter from Ethel, but concluded that she thought I should have started before it could have reached me. However, the last post that night brought me a short note from Sir John, which had somehow been delayed en route.

"Ethel begs me to send you a few lines in case you read an account of her accident in the papers, and should be alarmed. She is quite unhurt, beyond a severe burn on her right hand, which will prevent her writing for some time. A child in one of our cottages set its

pinafire on fire, and would have been badly burnt if Ethel had not met it running from the house. The child is unhurt, and Ethel's hand alone suffered. I am glad you will be with us so soon." Then followed a wild left-handed scrawl from my darling, "I am not a bit bad, and it doesn't hurt now. E."

"Doesn't hurt *now*!" I exclaimed, as I paced up and down the room, "Why it must have been agony at the time," and I shuddered and turned sick with horror at the mere picture of the danger escaped. I longed to start at once, but the mail had gone, and wait I must. No question now of remaining with Paul's body. I would take care it was left in a safe place, but Ethel needed me, and hers was the first claim. How long I ramped up and down I don't remember, but when the time to act came, I was calm, externally, but determined—quite determined. I waited until Monday afternoon, then rang for Mrs. Green, and told her I wished to take on the sitting-room and bedroom for at any rate one month. That I had decided not to take any of my painting things with me, but that as the tent must dry slowly I should leave it set up in the bedroom. I particularly requested that Sarah should not dust or meddle with my canvasses and sketches.

Mrs. Green was delighted to let her rooms to an absent lodger for one month certain, and hinted that perhaps I would bring my wife back with me if we passed through London.

I replied that my plans were quite uncertain, but that probably Mr. Solley would call for my painting box, etc., and bring them to Scotland when he came. That he was detained in town on business.

"I hope he will see a doctor; them faints are dangerous. You said he was much better this morning, sir; is he still lying down?"

"He has gone out—he would go. I could not stop him—though it is most inconvenient—imprudent, I mean."

To pay Mrs. Green for a month's lodging and to get through dinner did not take me long. I then went into the back bedroom and locked the door.

Paul still remained unconscious, and finding him deaf to all words of entreaty, and that none of my powers of persuasion induced him to return, I seized the painting box, opened the long narrow lid, folded a blanket and put it inside, and then with some difficulty laid my friend carefully in the box, folding the blanket over all but his face. I then closed the lid, but locked the box first, so that a crack

for air remained—the lid being held up by the lock. I next loosely wrapped the cord round the case, put it and all my painting materials into a cupboard, which I locked, removing the key to my own safe custody. The tent being fairly dry, I put it with the easel and canvasses. I then left the bedroom, locking the door behind me.

"I shall take the key of my bedroom with me, Mrs. Green; all my sketches are there drying," I said to the landlady, who stood by to see me off.

"Oh! sir! I shall want to get in to dust and put things right!"

"They will do as they are; good-bye," I shouted, and making a bolt for the cab I escaped, taking as heavy a load with me as the one I left behind.

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## CHAPTER II.

No need to describe my journey to Scotland. I slept until we reached Crewe, and again until we arrived at Perth, where a hot breakfast was truly reviving.

It was not until 12.30 that I reached Arrowmore Station, and found the dogcart waiting. Half-an-hour's drive brought me to the Castle. Under the gateway stood Sir John with hearty welcome on every line of his handsome old face.

"Come along! come along! Very glad to see you. None the worse for your fire? That's right. Got your second telegram this morning. All right, all right! Here's Ethel." And my discreet old host having brought me to the drawing-room door, vanished, and at last I had my darling safely in my arms. Half-an-hour passed and I had heard all the details of her accident. Then the gong sounded.

"Luncheon already!" exclaimed Ethel. "You must be starving, and everyone will be waiting for us. You know which is your room—number fifteen. You will find us in the dining-room."

"Have you many people staying?" I asked, pausing door in hand.

"Five men—you know them all—and two girls with their parents. Be quick or lunch will be cold," and waving her hand she retreated to the dining-room, while I rushed upstairs and hastily changed my travelling things for cleaner garments. How dusty and grimy one feels after a night in the train!

I found the ladies and Sir John eager to hear particulars of my fire, and after gratifying their curiosity, came the question I was dreading.

"Where is Solley? Why did he go off so suddenly?"

"I can't tell you," I replied truthfully, "it was some Indian business I know, but he started in such haste I had no time to ask any questions. It is very provoking, for he does not know how long he may be detained. I hoped he might be able to start with me yesterday, but as he couldn't, I was not going to wait for him any longer."

Ethel smiled. "You looked rather fagged. Do you feel inclined to do as we planned this afternoon? We thought of driving you and papa to the South Lodge, to meet the other guns. They are murdering rabbits to-day."

I was quite ready—and a merry party we were. The woods and glades of Arrowmore are beautiful enough, and to be there again with Ethel was sufficient happiness to banish all anxious possibilities from my mind. When we met again for dinner one of our party was missing, Tony Douglas. Whatever mischief could be got into, Tony was certain to be thereof the prime instigator. He pretended to be very stupid, and was the butt of all the other men, but Tony was not nearly such a fool as he looked. We had just finished our fish when he appeared, his dark little face overcast with an expression of injured innocence. I should explain that Tony was an ardent fisherman, and had been out with a keeper, "on his own hook" as he expressed it, all day.

"No thanks to you, Douglas, that we have any fish for dinner!" said old Colonel Brown. "What made you so late?"

"Basket too heavy for you and Macann to carry between you?" drawled a man I heartily disliked—a certain Captain Dawson.

Douglas shook his head. "I sent Macann back about four o'clock."

"Why?" enquired one of the Miss Browns. "Didn't the fish bite?"

"Bite!" ejaculated the disappointed Tony, who had been crawling after the wily trout for some ten hours in the blazing sun, and trying every fly in his book, as he whipped and whipped with lightest hand and driest fly, as he was accustomed to do in Hampshire. "Bite! No, they were as shy as if I were using a Bird of Paradise on a halter!" Miss Brown, whose knowledge of the craft

was limited to perch fishing, with the common or garden worm, looked puzzled, and Sir John hastily interposed with, "Sent Macann home? Then I expect you came back the longest way."

"I guess I did, if a large house about three miles from here is in the way at *all*," grumbled Tony.

"A large house three miles off? Why, my dear fellow, what took you to Admiral Philpot's?"

"An admiral, is he? Thought he didn't like my wet boots. I believe he thought I was a burglar." We were all laughing at Douglas's dismal face and voice, and at last drew his story out.

"Macann told me to keep straight on by the river, until I came to the old bridge. Old it was, for when I reached it and quietly strolled across, it let me through into the water. Ugh! it wasn't deep, but I fell somehow in a heap, and my waders were full, my hat gone, and clothes soaked before I scrambled out. It was getting dusk by the time I had emptied my waders and rescued my hat."

"Why, man, the admiral's house is half the size of this. Did you go in?"

"Only into the library. I thought the hall seemed rather different. Supposed I came in the back way, but the old gentleman sitting by the fire, nearly had a fit when I sat down. 'Who are you?' said he. 'Staying in the house,' said I, 'when did *you* arrive?' 'I, sir?' said he, 'I arrived just seventy years ago, and who the dickens are *you*?'"

"Dear me! how awkward. What did you do?" enquired Miss Brown sympathetically.

"I fled," quoth Tony. "And if the old admiral stood long upon his doorstep, and is shouting as energetically still, as he was when I vanished, he will be voiceless for the future."

How we laughed! Then the buzz of our fourteen voices flowed on again: the sportsmen comparing notes, and Ethel and I managing to talk together every now and then, while scraps of the general conversation reached us. During one pause, I heard Colonel Brown boring poor Mrs. Calvert with one of his terrible riddles: "If a hen and a half lays an egg and a half in a day and a half, how many eggs would twelve hens lay in six days?"

After a quarter of an hour's torment, Mrs. Calvert, who hated riddles and was feeble about figures, looked despairingly at Ethel,

who created a diversion by asking what "the total bag had been."

"Four hundred rabbits, sixteen hares, five wood pigeon and one woodcock, which Hyde bowled over by accident."

"Quite true, I fired at a rabbit, and killed the woodcock on the ground; did not even see it," I replied.

After dinner we joined the ladies in the music room, and practised some duets and glees, for a village concert was to take place on Thursday, and besides the usual local talent we had been asked to contribute some half dozen songs to the entertainment. Arrowmore is one of the best houses I know for a large party of people to be happy in, whatever the temper of the visitors or state of the weather. There is a large covered tennis-court, a good music-room, with an organ worked by water power, a capital billiard table, photographing rooms, a large lake full of perch, boats of various kinds, and such skating and curling in the winter! Add to this excellent shooting, and one of the pleasantest hosts to be found in Scotland. Lady Keel was an invalid, and seldom left her room until the afternoon, then she retired to the inner drawing-room before dinner, where one or two guests at a time were admitted. Dear old lady! Her beautiful face and gentle voice remained in the memory of many a man who came to Arrowmore as a visitor and left it as one of Lady Keel's friends. She never preached, never scolded, but the love in her eyes drew all hearts to her. Her gentle presence overshadowed the whole house with a spirit of refinement and purity that was felt though unseen.

By some subtle power she drew out and fostered the best part of every one, and I know no woman who so completely led and swayed, not only the tone of the general conversation, but had also the power of checking evil, and bringing out good, with no seeming effort. I felt half inclined to confide my difficulty about Paul to my kind hostess, but I knew she shared Sir John's dislike to everything connected with spiritualism. Sir John, indeed, was quite rabid on the subject. Tolerant on most points (even when discussing politics), let any one start the subject of table-turning, spirit-rapping, or even electro-biology, and at once the dear old man's face clouded over, and his hearty voice would be heard, in more than usually decided tones, firmly changing the topic of discussion.

Never, oh! never shall I forget the scene, when our host dis-

covered lying upon his hall table a volume, entitled "Karma." We were waiting for a neighbour who was to join our shooting party that morning. Keepers, dogs, guns and sportsmen were ready, and still the expected friend appeared not. We dawdled about for ten minutes, when a sudden explosion from Sir John brought me back into the hall. "Is this your book, sir?" (he was holding it as if it was infectious).

"No; I believe it is Captain Smyth's. I saw it with his papers and rugs when he arrived last night."

Sir John turned quietly to one of the footmen—"Take this book to Captain Smyth's room." No more was said, and I gave a hint to the book's owner to avoid all such literary work, and discussions upon the same, while at Arrowmore. But I noticed that never again was he invited to Sir John's.

So I kept my troubles to myself, and for the first week almost forgot them. Paul would doubtless soon turn up, and what *was* the use of being worried about an affair I was powerless to alter. Nevertheless, it was rather unpleasant one day, when we had been after the grouse, had got to the "moors" in good time, and taken up our positions, two men in each "butt," except in mine—I was alone. We had felt a little uncertain about one of our guests, who had never shot driven grouse before, and I devoutly hoped he would not pepper me in his excitement. For exciting it is when the birds come over one like rockets. Whiz!

"I wonder how long we shall have to wait," I muttered.

"Not as long as you have kept me, I hope," answered Paul's voice, and turning round I beheld my friend.

"At last," I exclaimed. "Better late than never. Here, take my other gun, the birds will be on us in a minute. What has made you such an abominable time before you followed me?"

Paul looked grave as he answered, "Put down some of the delay, Ted, to your own account. I have been trying to return for the last week, but your painting box is so firmly corded that it presents an effectual barrier to the consummation which we both desire."

"My painting box! What do you mean, Paul?"

"What I say," replied my friend. "You have often wished to see my astral body, and it strikes me you are likely to see nothing more substantial, until you return to town, and unfasten the case in which you have made my solid flesh a prisoner." I gazed at Paul in silent

consternation, and he continued, "Mrs. Green has re-let your rooms, and has tightly corded your painting box. The present owner of the rooms seems to object to my nocturnal visits. He can't make up his mind whether I am a bona fide ghost, or whether his own brain is softening. Meanwhile, if he happens to explore the contents of the cupboard, and I am not there, it may make rather an unpleasant business for you."

"It's an unpleasant business already," I exclaimed angrily. "Why the dickens I ever sent you on that idiotic journey, I can't imagine, and your astral body must be an excessively incompetent person if it can't take care of itself. Do you mean to tell me that I must return to London simply to uncord that box?"

"I am afraid you must," replied Solley. "You see, a letter to Mrs. Green would hardly explain the difficulty."

I turned angrily away, and catching up my gun fired into the pack of grouse as they came over; then turning, I prepared to fire again, when a stinging blow knocked me flat. I slowly picked myself up, wondering what had happened. Solley had disappeared, and in his place stood the man from the next butt, looking more like a ghost than my lately departed friend.

"Are you hurt?" exclaimed the luckless sportsman. "I am afraid I fired across; *did* I hit you!"

I pointed to my right arm, which hung useless, and from which the blood was dripping fast.

"Call Dr. Boyd, will you, he is in the far butt, he will soon tie me up; I daresay it isn't much."

But it was. My arm was broken, and the next day found me helpless and in bed. I fretted over the possibilities of Paul's body being discovered, until I was in a fever, and Paul himself—no, it wasn't himself, but his double—haunted my room until I felt as frantic as Mrs. Green's lodger. All to no purpose. The days went by, the wedding was postponed, and I began to entertain gloomy thoughts about the recovery of my arm. Useless for six weeks it certainly was, but before the end of that time I was about again, my recovery being only delayed by a feverish attack from worry. At last I persuaded Ethel to let me make a hurried visit to London before our wedding, nominally to consult a specialist about my arm, but chiefly to liberate Paul Solley from my painting box. I registered an inward vow to have it out with my friend

when he was restored to himself. I spent the day previous to my journey boating and fishing with Ethel, and we returned to the Castle in time for tea, but found a crowd of callers, so I soon slipped away to the library, and as it grew dusk fell asleep upon the old square sofa. An hour must have passed before I woke. The room was dark, and from the open door of the adjoining apartment came the sound of Sir John's voice. "Show the man in here—I will see him before dinner as his business is urgent." I dosed again, until aroused by the stranger saying loudly, "Then, Sir John, I am sorry to say that I have a warrant for Mr. Edgar Hyde's arrest, on a charge of wilful murder."

"Mind what you say, fellow," thundered my kind old host. "How dare you make such an accusation! And who the dickens are you? How dare you steal into my house on the pretence of urgent business and then talk of arrest and murder, as calmly as if you were only the postman delivering the daily letters!"

"I am a detective from Scotland Yard, Sir John, and if you will allow me to tell you rather a long story I will explain. It is a black case for Mr. Hyde. I engaged rooms, about two months ago, at Mr. Hyde's late lodgings, and for a few nights nothing particular occurred; but on the fourth evening, I was disturbed by some one walking round my bed in the dark. I lit a candle but could see no one. This occurred not once, but during five successive nights. I then left the gas burning, and watched, and on the sixth night observed the folding doors into the sitting-room slowly open, and a gentleman enter the bedroom. He looked pale and thin, and seemed to be searching for something. He stooped, and looked under the bed, then turned to a corner cupboard and tried to open it. Meanwhile, I stole softly from my bed and endeavoured to seize my visitor, but my hands grasped the air only. The figure vanished. Now, sir, I am not a nervous man, but when I realised that a spirit had actually been in my room, I confess that my heart beat pretty quick."

"What has all this nonsense to do with Mr. Hyde?" interrupted Sir John. "Spirit, indeed; I can well believe that there had been too much spirit, not only in the room, but in *you*, sir. Ghosts are generally raised by alcoholic vapours!"

"Your pardon, Sir John, pray hear me patiently; whatever, or whoever my visitor was, remained a mystery until two nights ago.

Mrs. Green was with me in the sitting-room when the stranger appeared, and walked quietly into the bedroom. I darted after him, followed by the landlady, who seemed much agitated. The outer door was locked but the figure had again vanished. I then insisted upon the corner cupboard being opened. We found inside it a coffin-like box, which, upon examination, proved to contain a dead body—a body exactly similar to my ghostly visitor, and which Mrs. Green testified to being the remains of Mr. Paul Solley. The landlady also swore that Mr. Hyde had been much confused about his friend's apparent illness, that he had locked up his bedroom and that he had arranged to return after his wedding had taken place."

"I don't believe a word of Mrs. Green's story," broke in Ethel's indignant voice; "there is a mistake somewhere, which Mr. Hyde will be able to explain."

"Beg pardon, Miss, but if I am rightly informed, the gentleman has nearly given us all the slip; wasn't he just starting for London to-morrow morning and without any good reason. It is supposed he meant to escape abroad."

"Keep your suppositions to yourself, my friend," I quietly interposed, as I put my arm through Ethel's, "I have heard your story and can believe that you think it correct. I can, however, explain everything."

"I shall be glad if you can, sir," answered the detective. He evidently considered me a deeper villain than ever. "But you must return to London with me and explain matters there."

I turned from the man and spoke to Sir John, "Paul is not dead, only in a trance, he is often taken ill in this way, and thoroughly objects to its being known; he revives and seems none the worse as a rule, but this must have been a longer trance than usual. I knew he would be safe in my rooms. Mrs. Green must own that I retained my apartments, and that I told her Mr. Solley would come for my painting effects. The body would not have been disturbed until Paul naturally awoke, if Mrs. Green had not broken her word to me and taken in another lodger."

Sir John looked bewildered, the detective incredulous and impassive, but Ethel pressed my arm reassuringly. Others might doubt, but true love wavers not; she did not even seem anxious, and saw me off as bravely the next morning as if no detective had appeared upon the scene, to "murder sleep" the night before.

I had telegraphed to my lawyer to meet me at Euston, and it was a relief to see his shrewd but puzzled face.

In less than two hours from my arrival in town, I was on my way to Coleshill Street, in strict custody it is true, but with Jack Mayhew to pull me through the ordeal of "facing my victim."

I had firmly maintained that Solley was alive, though I granted that he might appear insensible, and Mayhew had insisted that we should be allowed to view the body, and that a doctor should accompany us. I laugh now, when recalling Detective Sharp's face, as we gravely entered the sitting-room. There, at the breakfast table, was seated Paul Solley, a newspaper in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other. Both were hastily laid aside as he rose to greet us.

"Well, I'm blessed!" ejaculated the detective.

But the tone of his voice suggested that he did not feel certain his sojourn upon Mount Gerizim would not be followed by a speedy exile to Mount Ebal.

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### Love.

Love is always sweet, folk say,  
But yet, I rather doubt it,  
If love be cool—why, any day,  
I'd sooner be without it;  
If my "dear" perchance should find  
Some lips as sweet as mine are,  
I'd toss my head, and "never mind"  
Such love might "go to China."

If fickle love took wing to fly,  
Or vanish'd like a bubble,  
Would I call it back?—not I,  
Such love's not worth the trouble.  
But—if love be warm and true,  
And never fickle—never,  
I think I'd take it,—wouldn't you?  
And keep that love for ever.

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# Running after Shadows.

IN THREE PARTS.

By FERIERA.

## CHAPTER I.

A ROUGH CHARACTER.

LEY RECTORY,

*February 3rd.*

"WILL you two fellows run down and spend a few days with me, if you have nothing better to do? I am a bachelor for the time being, as my wife has gone for a week to her people in Norfolk. It is a long time since I have seen you both; do come if possible.

Ever your old friend,

NED BLAINE."

I tossed the note across the table to my companion with an interrogatory, "What do you say, Giles?"

Giles perused it, and then looked up with a pleased smile.

"Bless the dear old boy, of course we'll go. But he does not mention any date, Hal."

"That's Ned all over," I answered with a laugh. "But it is of no consequence; suppose we go to-morrow, I believe we have done all we wanted to do in town."

"Yes, I fancy we polished off the last item yesterday, and we have called on all the people we wished to see, so there is really nothing to keep us smoke-drying up here any longer."

"Right, then; to-morrow be it. In the meantime you might be putting some of our things together, while I write home and let them know what we are up to."

At the time of which I speak, I, Harry Brooke, aged twenty-six, and my adopted brother, Giles Ferney (my senior by two years), were sitting at breakfast together in a comfortable room of one of the West End Hotels. Giles' father, Admiral Ferney, an old friend of my own father, had died when his son was only six years of age, leaving the child, whose mother had died at his birth, without a protector. My father, partly from affection for his dead friend,

and partly through compassion for the poor orphan, adopted the boy, and he and I and my two sisters had grown up happily together, our affection nothing marred by the fact of his being our brother only in name.

At the respective ages of twenty-two and twenty, when we were both together at Cambridge, my father died suddenly, and since that time we had been knocking about in different parts of the world, returning occasionally for a few months to the old home in Dorsetshire, as we never cared to leave our mother and sisters alone for any great length of time. It was only, however, to start off again on some hunting and collecting excursion, either into the heart of the Rockies or the wilds of Australia, in fact, wherever the fancy led us. We were both passionately fond of sport of all kinds, and had now a very valuable collection of foreign birds and beasts of every description. It was not long since we had returned from one of our expeditions, and after spending a month at home, had come up to London for a few days to call on old friends, and see to the stuffing and setting up of some of our most valuable specimens.

Edward Blaine, the author of the above epistle, was a college friend of ours, now a married man and rector of the parish of Ley, in Hampshire, the living having been in the gift of his family for many generations.

The next morning saw us tramping impatiently up and down the platform of that noisy and over-crowded station—Waterloo, waiting for the 12.45 down train to Winchester, our destination being about seven miles short of that city. The train drew up at last, not immoderately late, considering the thick fog that prevailed, and entering an empty second-class carriage we prepared to make ourselves comfortable. Just as the train was steaming out of the station there was a bustle on the platform, mingled with cries from excited porters and officials, and a man jumped on to the footboard of our compartment and swung himself in. A figure of medium stature but very strongly built, with great broad shoulders and a thick bull neck, the head large and covered with sandy-red hair, formed a *tout ensemble*, which, together with his energetic mode of entry, served at once to draw my attention. He was dressed as a common working man and carried the ordinary carpenter's bag, a large hammer serving as its handle. It struck me that whatever he might be now, he had in all probability been at one time in the

service of a railway company, possibly a guard, for no one but an active man accustomed to jumping on and off trains, would have attempted the feat he had just accomplished with apparent ease.

He seated himself opposite Giles with his face to the engine, and proceeded to probe the recesses of his jaw with one of the implements usually devoted to that purpose.

"Sharp bit of work, that," said I. "You have probably been on the line some years and learned the knack, eh?"

The man looked up quickly, and I noticed that his eyes were small, narrow, and steel grey, not unlike those of a pig, except for colour.

"No," he answered surlily, and then continued to search the cavities of his teeth, with an assiduity worthy of better objects, for I noticed that his teeth were particularly long and yellow.

At the first stoppage of the train I expected to see our red-headed *vis-à-vis* alight and change into another carriage, for he certainly had not the appearance of a second-class passenger. But he evidently had no such intention, for he sat still in his corner and commenced to tap his front teeth with a dirty-looking penknife.

"Confound the fellow," I muttered under my breath, "I've had about enough of him and his ugly molars. I wish to goodness he'd get out of it."

I might just as well have wished for the moon. There he sat, with his head thrown slightly back and his mouth half open, while that infernal tap, tap, tap continued without intermission. After this had gone on for a couple of hours, I could see that Giles, who had been asleep part of the time, was beginning to grow annoyed at the operation.

We were within two stations of our destination, when the man suddenly shut up his knife with a snap, and pulled out of his pocket a short black pipe and a paper of tobacco.

Now, if there is one thing more objectionable than any other to a refined smoker, it is the smell of coarse tobacco smoked in a rank clay pipe, and on this subject Giles was peculiarly sensitive.

"This is not a smoking carriage," he objected.

"It'll be smoky enough by the time I've done," came the quick reply.

I saw Giles' eyes flash, but he answered quietly, "There is a smoking compartment next door, into which you can change at the next station."

The man's answer was to strike a match very deliberately on his boot and apply it to the pipe. The next minute Giles had bent forward, snatched the pipe from between the smoker's lips, and flung it out of the window. The man sprang to his feet with a fierce oath, and drawing a large hammer from his bag (the handle of which I had previously noticed), he struck a heavy blow at Giles. The latter avoided the hammer by throwing himself backwards on the seat of the carriage, but before he could recover himself the man had raised the hammer to strike again.

Had that blow descended I shudder to think of the consequence; but just at that critical moment the handle of my umbrella (a stout, knotty piece of hazel root) rattled among his teeth, and he fell down with great violence upon the floor of the carriage. I wrenched the hammer from his grasp and flung it out of the window, together with his bag of tools, and our aggressor, thus rendered practically harmless, sat still on the floor and glared at us.

The train was running into the next station before I had decided in my mind whether to hand him over to the police, or let him go free with the loss of his property; but he saved me all further perplexity on that score, by suddenly springing up and jumping out of the carriage just as the train stopped.

This somewhat hasty proceeding was not altogether to my taste; in fact, I felt rather a fool, for no man cares to have his little private debates settled for him in this off-hand manner; besides, I felt convinced that Giles was feeling secretly amused at this abrupt termination of our little adventure. I cleared my throat, therefore, with a would-be nonchalant air, and tried to look as though our late prisoner had done the very thing I most desired. It was a wretched farce, however, and I felt that Giles saw through it, but he forebore any remark, and in due time the train drew up at the station of A——, where we alighted.

Now there lived in the town of A—— an old maiden sister of my father's, and she would have taken it very unkindly on our part had we passed through the town without looking her up, so giving half-a-crown to a porter, for which he promised to convey our luggage to the Rectory on a truck after business hours, we decided to stay and take afternoon tea with her, and walk over to Ley afterwards, a distance of about two miles.

We found Aunt Jemima in excellent health, and very pleased to see

us, and after a capital tea and plenty of family talk we took our departure, promising to come and see her again before returning to Town. We had traversed about half the distance, which lay between A—— and the village of which our friend was rector, when we came to a place where the railway crossed the road. The roadway was spanned by a high, red brick archway, which gave forth a curious echo to our footsteps as we passed underneath. Giles and I looked at one another and stopped simultaneously. That echo recalled many a memory of boyish escapades and adventures, when it used to be the greatest delight of our lives to come and spend the holidays at the old homestead of our grandparents, who lived in the most beautiful spot in all Hampshire, a small village about two miles beyond Ley. We stood together for a few moments, looking up at the straight lines formed by the bricks over our heads, and I was conscious of a vague sense of surprise that they should look so exactly the same as they had done years ago, though had they in truth changed from red to yellow bricks, I might have had real cause for wonderment.

"Things don't alter much," said Giles, and I knew that his thoughts had been akin to my own.

I was about to return an answer of some kind, when we were startled by hearing a sort of shuffling sound overhead; then there was a heavy fall, and a loud curse rang out on the evening air, awakening the echoes of the old bridge, and causing a frightened blackbird to dart from his hiding place in a bush close by. I said "evening," but it was really not much more than five o'clock, though rapidly growing dark.

Running along the road a short way, we turned and looked up at the top of the railway embankment, which at that place was about thirty feet high. For a moment or so we saw nothing, and then there rose above the level of the parapet of the bridge the figure of a man. He stooped down and picked up something which looked like a bag; this he slung over his shoulder, supporting it, as far as I could make out in the failing light, by the handle of some implement, after the manner of carpenters. As he passed the end of the parapet his figure stood out boldly against the darkening sky, and something in his height and build seemed familiar to me.

"I do believe," I said quietly to Giles, "it is our friend of the railway carriage. He has walked back along the line to where we

threw out his tools, has found them, and is now either walking home or making for the nearest railway station."

"If that were so he would have stopped at A——; that is, provided he came all the way by the line," said Giles. "But whoever he is, he seems pretty screwed," he added, as we watched the man stumbling along by the side of the rails, every now and then catching his foot in a sleeper and falling headlong. Giles looked at his watch.

"There is no train for another couple of hours," said he, "and before that time the fellow will have reached the next station, that is if he keeps to the line. Come along, old chap, we shall be late, and Ned will think we are not coming till to-morrow."

We had got over another half mile at a good round pace when Giles suddenly said—

"It can't have been he; it's absurd to suppose it."

"Been he! who?" said I, rather at sea.

"Why, that smoking beast in the train."

"Oh! I see. But, my dear fellow, I have no doubt about it. Who else could it have been?"

"Why, some drunken navvy of course."

"Nonsense," said I. "It was our 'hammer and tongues' friend and no one else."

"Don't believe it," said Giles.

"Of course you don't," said I a little testily. "Because it makes the affair slightly romantic, you immediately begin shutting your eyes to facts. Oh Giles, Giles, when will you get a little romance inside that matter-of-fact head of yours."

"Steady, hold on, old chap," said Giles with a laugh. "Here you are telling me that I shut my eyes to facts, and then complaining that I am too matter-of-fact, all in a breath. Never mind, Hal," he added, linking his arm affectionately in mine; "so long as you have enough romance for the two of us we shall do very well."

I felt ashamed of myself for my little outburst, though still convinced that our friend of the railway carriage and the man on the bridge were one and the same individual, and we walked on in silence until we turned in at the gates of Ley Rectory.

## CHAPTER II.

## AMATEUR POLICE.

"Now, you fellows, draw your chairs nearer the fire and make yourselves comfortable. I have a bit of a yarn to unfold."

Giles and I complied with our host's request. We had just made an excellent dinner, washed down with old reminiscences and older port, and felt disposed to be comfortable. For Ned to have a "yarn" to spin was something unusual, and we were proportionately curious.

He did not begin immediately, but sat leaning back with his elbow on the table and his chin resting on his hand. He was not much altered from what he had been years ago, except that he was slightly stouter, and, if possible, handsomer. His fine brown eyes were looking thoughtfully into the fire, and I fancied by certain lines on his face that, from some cause or another, he had been a good deal worried lately. A glance at Giles led me to believe that he too had noticed this, and I was glad, for I knew that he would not fail to cheer Ned up in the course of the evening.

Presently Blaine looked up and began abruptly, "In my letter to you, Hal, I told you that my wife had gone to stay with her parents in Norfolk. Well, that is only half the truth; the real fact is I was obliged to send her away for a time;" and he looked steadily at us to mark the effect of his words.

"Did she do this?" said Giles in a serio-comic tone, tapping his own nose, and indicating a slight scratch on the rector's handsome feature.

Ned caught up a table-napkin and threw it at him, which Giles dodged, with the result that it settled in the coal-scuttle, the lid of which was open.

"No," said he, smiling. "That was my cat, Alice. I fear she has not sufficient respect for her pastor. But, joking apart," he added in a more serious voice, "I am only speaking the truth. Marjory is not very strong just now, and there have been serious troubles in the village of late, which made her very nervous."

"So you sent her home, and had us down to act policemen in the village, eh? Well done, old man, but where are the disturbers

of the peace? Bring in one or two of them now to begin upon, will you," and Giles stood up and commenced to remove his coat.

Ned looked at him for a moment in astonishment, and then burst out laughing.

Giles sat down again. "That's right," said he. "A good laugh will raise your spirits, and then you can tell us your troubles. Any murders yet?" he continued in the tone of a man inquiring the price of butter.

"No, no," said Blaine, recovering himself and wiping his eyes. "What a fellow you are, Giles. But if you want a full, true, and particular account of my 'troubles,' as you call them, 'lend me your ears,' and you shall presently know as much about them as I do myself. Only don't interrupt me again, Giles."

"All right, old chap. Get up steam, and once you are under weigh you shall have a clear run."

"Well, you must know that for some time past, I have noticed two or three suspicious-looking characters loafing about the village. One of them, whom I find is named Harding, I have discovered to be the brother-in-law of the blacksmith; the other two appear to have no belongings in the place, and no one seems to know anything about them. They are seen chiefly at night, not appearing much in the daytime. The man Harding is known to travel often up and down the line—that is to say, he is frequently seen getting into the train after booking to London, but no one has ever seen him returning home; though after these excursions he is always to be found in the blacksmith's workshop next morning. There have been several robberies committed in the neighbourhood of late, not only in the way of house-breaking, but also upon pedestrians on the high road, after the fashion of the last century. The police have become suspicious; so much so, indeed, that quite recently they put on a special man, to patrol the roads and approaches in the neighbourhood of Ley. This was a fortnight or three weeks ago. The precaution seemed to have a good effect. For a day or two no more robberies were reported, and foot passengers were unmolested, when one morning the policeman was found half murdered in the private garden of a gentleman's house, not far from the church. The police then took more active steps to discover the perpetrators of this and the foregoing outrages. But all to no purpose! They have neither

been able to capture the thieves, nor to lay their hands on any of the stolen property, though they continued their investigations for upwards of two weeks. At the expiration of this period they appeared to give it up as hopeless, and withdrew their force; but four days ago I received a communication from the authorities, intimating that they were not content to leave matters in their present unsatisfactory condition, and asking if I would mind having one of their detectives in my house, suggesting, as the best cloak to his identity, that in the event of my complying with their request, I should represent the detective as being an old friend of mine come down on a short visit. I at once wrote to signify my ready acceptance of their proposals, and the detective came next day. He is a quiet, gentlemanly little man, possessed of an immense idea of his own importance and capabilities, an estimation justifiable as far as I am able to judge, for he seems clever and thoroughly understands his business. He will probably be in before long! When he is late, Bales puts something by for him. I have given all the servants a holiday, with the exception of Bales and Mrs. Wilson; you'll remember them of old? They both know the detective's true character—by-the-bye his name is Jensen—and are able to keep their own counsel. I have given out that Jensen is an old friend come to stay with me, though I fear that it is not quite square," and the poor clergyman sighed in his perplexity.

Giles and I smiled involuntarily at this truly characteristic wind-up of our old friend. In his college days Giles had been wont to say of him that Blaine would never be happy until he had "squared" even the circle.

"And now," said Blaine, "you know all about it. These proceedings have rendered poor Marjory rather nervous, and what with the worry, and the fact that she had been out of health for some little time, I began to feel anxious, and persuaded her, though with great difficulty, to go home for a few days, feeling sure she would benefit by the change. I then sent for you fellows to come and cheer me up a bit, and here we are."

"Right you are, my boy," cried Giles, in the hearty voice he always adopted when he wished to raise anyone's spirits. "Here we are, and here we remain until this business is ferreted out. But you will be wanting to write your Sunday sermon now, so come along, Hal, we'll go and take a turn out of doors." So saying,

he took me by the arm, and together we left the room and the house.

We passed through the high iron gates at the end of the carriage drive, and, turning to the left, we struck the high road.

After strolling on for a short while in silence, I presently remarked, "Rather curious all this, eh, Giles?"

"Pooh! Pooh!" he answered, with his never-to-be-taken-in-or-surprised look, "I don't see anything very curious about it; only a number of robberies rather cleverly executed, nothing more."

"Yes, but it's odd that the police have discovered nothing."

"Oh! as to that, it may be mere chance—the simplest thief will sometimes escape by a fluke, you know."

"True," said I, "but nevertheless it is more puzzling than you allow."

There are certain men in whom the bump of common sense (or is it that of incredulity) is so abnormally developed, that they can never bring themselves to admit the fact of anything being out of the common. With them nothing is beyond the reach of common analysis; everything has its simple solution. They form, each individually, a sort of animated mental syllabus, capable of so much condensed reasoning, but no more. I have even seen this form of abstract reasoning, this absolution, carried to such an excess with some men, as to render them, at times, incapable of crediting the evidence of their own senses.

Most of my readers will join with me in agreeing that this kind of person is particularly aggravating to the man of a more imaginative mind. To the former class belonged Giles—not to the extent I have ventured to depict, which, to my way of thinking, borders on thick-headedness—but sufficiently so to cause me, at times, a slight feeling of annoyance, when his prosaic reasoning and quiet, half amused incredulity, acted as a wet blanket upon my more romantic thoughts and ideas. And now, for the second time to-day, I felt a certain disappointment at his remarks, and began to wonder, secretly, if this want of mental animation (I can call it by no other name) were altogether natural, or whether it was, in part, assumed.

## CHAPTER III.

MR. JENSEN.

WE had walked some little distance along the road, and now found ourselves just opposite a cottage well known to us both by sight and tradition. The cottage stood well back from the road, and was surrounded on all sides by a high clipped yew hedge from ten to twelve feet in height, which formed an archway over the gate. A rather wide bricked pathway led from the little gate in the hedge to the cottage door. To right and left of this pathway was a small plot of garden, stocked with overgrown currant and gooseberry bushes, and bounded on either side by the dark hedge. Behind the cottage was a small but dense plantation of yews, beyond that the open fields for about a couple of hundred yards, and then the railway. I should have previously mentioned that in this part of the country the railway ran parallel with the high road for many miles, its distance varying but never exceeding three or four hundred yards. But to return to the cottage.

As I have previously stated, Giles and I both knew it well, though, having never been inside, our knowledge was confined to the exterior, and the various legends concerning it, which were numerous.

Amongst other tales, it was said that it had once been the home of a miser, who for many years had used it as a repository wherein to secrete his bags of gold; but that one night some robbers broke in, and murdered the old man for the sake of his wealth. They then grew alarmed at what they had done, and began to cast about for the best means of hiding the corpse. Eventually they buried their victim beneath the stairs, which was as good a way as any other of disposing of the body, though it lacked originality. However, they did not find the gold, and the story goes, that in their rage and remorse they went out into the meadows, not a hundred yards from the cottage door, and drowned themselves in the river. Of course, ever after this, it was said that the old miser's spirit haunted the cottage at night.

How much of this story is true I do not know, but the fact remained, and for over fifty years it had been uninhabited, so strong

was the popular prejudice against the spot. There it stood, year after year, grim, silent, and empty.

Such thoughts as these were passing through my mind, as I stood looking over the gate at the lonely, useless dwelling, lighted up by the pale rays of the moon. Anything uncanny or ghostly always had a peculiar fascination for me, and I surveyed the cottage to-night with more than usual interest. Suddenly I started! Yes—no—yes. Did my eyes deceive me; or was it really a light which I saw in one of the lower windows? Yes, there it was again, a faint glimmer from inside the room, throwing the reflection of a human figure upon the drawn blind.

I grasped Giles' arm to attract his attention, and saw that his eyes were rivetted upon the spot which had so excited my interest. Suddenly he spoke, but in a low, hushed whisper.

"Didn't Blaine say it was still untenanted?"

"Yes," I answered in the same tone. "I asked him particularly, and he said that it was as empty as it had stood for the last fifty years."

"Come along then," he rejoined. "There is a ghost here, and we must investigate him."

I followed him through the gate, which opened noiselessly, and with a few strides we were within three feet of the window. As we stood there, the light from within shone out stronger than before, and the shadow of a woman's figure was outlined upon the blind. It struck me as odd that there should be this obstruction to the eyes of the outside world, in the window of an empty house.

Gently Giles grasped the handle of the cottage door, and slowly turned it. Would the door give, or would he find it fastened? A thrill of intense excitement ran through me! I mentally contrasted the excitement of animal hunting with that of ghost hunting, and was fain to give the palm to the latter. There is about it a certain creeping of the nerves, an all-pervading sense of uncertainty, which no other pursuit, however exhilarating, affords.

I glanced once more at the window. The light was gone. Then I heard the door creak slightly and in another moment I was beside Giles in the cottage. His hand was already upon the door of the room where we had seen the light. He turned the handle, but the door resisted. In an instant both our shoulders were against it, and it burst open with a crash.

All was dark within. I struck a light and looked around. Nothing met my sight but damp walls and an empty fireplace—there was not so much as a cupboard in the room.

With a grunt of disgust Giles turned tail and went out again, and I followed more slowly, shutting the cottage door behind me.

I had proceeded about half way down the path leading to the gate, when my eye, sharpened by years of travel and hunting, lit upon the figure of a man crouching behind a large currant bush. In a moment I had him covered with the revolver which I always carry in my hip pocket at night.

"Get up and show yourself," I said sternly.

The man rose with alacrity and came out into the moonlight.

"You need not shoot me, Mr. Brooke," he said quietly, "or is it Mr. Ferney?" he added.

I was slightly staggered for a moment, but before I could frame a reply, I heard Giles calling to me from the road. The next instant he came into sight, passing through the gate.

"What on earth are you delaying for? I've got it——" he was saying as he came towards me, but he stopped short on seeing my companion.

"So have I 'got it,'" said I rather grimly. "But I don't know what it is yet, though it seems to know me."

The unknown individual laughed lightly.

"Allow me to introduce myself, gentlemen," he said. "I am the—er—very particular friend of the Reverend Mr. Blaine, of this parish. Now, perhaps, we know one another."

I held out my hand. "I beg your pardon, Mr. Jensen," I said.

"No occasion, sir, no occasion, I assure you," he exclaimed, shaking my hand warmly. "I like to see a man ready with his barker at a moment's notice, though you should never pull the trigger, mind you, except as a last resource, yes, quite a last resource. But now, gentlemen, I have been the deeply interested witness of your proceedings for the last quarter of an hour, and I am of opinion that we ought to examine that door, which you so recently broke open.

"What good will that do?" said I.

The detective was about to answer, when Giles said abruptly, "You wish to see whether it was secured on the outside or inside."

The man only nodded as we turned towards the cottage, but he gave Giles a quick look indicative of surprise at his acuteness.

"I ought to have thought of it before," I heard Giles say to himself. "But there, I don't believe it's anything," he muttered.

We were soon once more within the cottage, when Jensen drew a dark lantern from under his coat and turned the slide. The bright light at once revealed to us the fact that the door had been fastened on the inside, for there were the sockets of two shattered bolts still clinging to the frame, and some of the fragments were scattered about the floor. Jensen examined them carefully.

"Quite clean," he said softly, "No sign of rust. Been recently used, I reckon."

"After a thorough investigation of the room, he came out and closed the door, and together we left the cottage.

Not one of us spoke until we reached the road, when as Giles closed the gate behind him he observed, "That gate works easily; it has been lately oiled."

The detective gave him another of those swift, comprehensive glances, and said quickly, "Have you ever been in the Force?" Then seeing Giles' look of surprise—"I beg pardon, sir, but you're so uncommonly sharp. Yes," he added after a pause, reverting to the former subject, "I oiled that gate myself."

"Then you have watched there before," said Giles.

"That's so," was the quiet rejoinder; "and I should have learned more by a few evenings' quiet watching, than you did by to-night's proceedings. But then you gents always are so hasty," he concluded, as though in excuse for our stupidity.

"I am sorry if I spoiled your game," Giles returned, smiling; "but then, you know, I had no idea you were there."

"No, that's true," said Jensen; and no one spoke again until the Rectory gates were reached. Then the detective pulled up suddenly and touched us lightly on the shoulder.

"You gentlemen both know this part of the world thoroughly, do you not?" said he.

"Every inch of it," I answered.

"Good. And you are well acquainted with the people and their ways, I believe."

"Just a little," said I.

"And you purpose making some stay here, so I understood Mr. Blaine to say?"

"We mean staying here until this affair is thoroughly sifted,"

said Giles, unconsciously repeating the words he had made use of earlier in the evening, and I smiled to myself in the dark as I realized by the tone of his voice, that he too was becoming interested in this strong quest after—what? After shadows, for at present it was nothing more. And yet I felt a keen sense of excitement as I thought, first upon Ned's strange story, and then the still stranger events of the evening. "Perhaps," thought I, "the old haunted cottage is going to show itself worthy of its reputation at last, and afford us a real bit of excitement." Ah! little did I dream of the fatal significance which that fell habitation was so shortly to assume. "You may count on any assistance which it is in our power to render you, Mr. Jensen," said I.

"Thank you, sir. You may both be of the greatest service to me in this matter, and with your co-operation I hope that another few days will see the mystery cleared up. Some curious ideas have struck me, but we'll talk of them later on." So saying, he passed through the gate, and we followed.

"One more word, gentlemen," he added as the gates closed behind us. "I would not mention anything of this evening's affair to Mr. Blaine. He has been a good deal worried already, and will sleep the better for not hearing anything fresh to-night." Giles and I readily acquiesced, and as we took off our coats in the hall, I felt that I already liked the little detective.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### A COINCIDENCE.

THE next morning Giles and I—we shared one room—tumbled out of bed at an early hour. I was conscious of a pleasurable feeling of excitement. The events of the previous day kept recurring to my mind, and the more I thought over the matter the more I became convinced, that something very strange and unusual must lie at the root of the hitherto inexplicable mystery.

Giles, on the other hand, had quite recovered his usual unexcitable and somewhat combative frame of mind.

"Look here, Harry," said he presently, "don't you go running away with all sorts of improbable theories, about ghosts and haunted cottages and the like. If we are going to catch the burglars who

seem to be infesting this neighbourhood, it won't be by poking about in an old tumble-down cottage, and trying to convert ghosts out of wind and moonshine, neither will it be done by following and admiring the cunning tactics of a law official, who will spend his time oiling a gate, or skulking under a gooseberry bush, at one end of the village, while the robbers are breaking into a house at the other. No! We must look farther afield for the authors of these outrages than the mere centre of their depredations." He had hardly finished speaking when there was a knock at the door, and in response to my "come in," Jensen entered.

"You make an old proverb good, Mr. Jensen," said Giles, smiling, "for I was just speaking of you."

"Good morning, Mr. Ferney—good morning, Mr. Brook. I hope I see you both well, gentlemen."

We responded in a suitable manner to his greetings, and then he turned abruptly to Giles.

"You were saying last night, as you were returning to the cottage to look for your friend, that you had '*got*' something, sir. I presume you meant that some idea had struck you?"

"Well, yes," said Giles. "It struck me that I could account for the shadows upon the window blind."

"And your idea is —?"

"That they were merely shadows thrown by the yew trees upon the blind."

"And how do you account for the light in the room?"

Giles gave a slightly embarrassed laugh.

"Oh! as to that," said he, "I fancy that the moonlight aided by a touch of imagination is sufficient explanation."

The detective regarded him thoughtfully for a moment, and I could see that he was wondering whether this cool, matter-of-fact man really believed what he said.

"It's not of the least use to talk to Mr. Ferney," I broke in. "He always refuses to believe what he cannot explain."

The little detective coughed slightly, and his keen black eyes rested thoughtfully upon Giles' handsome face and figure, as he leant his six feet of height against the mantelpiece. Giles was taller than I was by about an inch, a fact of which I was sometimes rather jealous.

"Well," said Jensen, presently, "I believe we shall effect his cure before this business is cleared up." So saying he left the room.

"There goes a clever man running after shadows," said Giles contemptuously, as the door closed.

To our surprise it opened again, and the detective stood there with a smile upon his face.

"Excuse me, sir," said he, "for having overheard your last words." He paused momentarily and then continued. "We detectives, Mr. Ferney, are one and all obliged to work upon the principle by which the great Kingsley built up his wonderful works on the science of geology—that is to say, we have to work 'from the known to the unknown.' In other words, we have to make a definite standpoint, and from that standpoint we have to work out every possible theory in connection with it, which is compatible with common sense. This is what I am doing at the present moment, and this it is that causes you to form the opinion that I am—I use your own words—'running after shadows,' while it is my humble opinion that you, sir, are shutting your eyes to facts. We shall each work upon our own method, and time will show which is the better of the two." Having said this, with a good-natured bow and a smile he withdrew.

Giles laughed lightly as soon as the detective was out of hearing, but as he was giving a final brush to his hair, he said, "I believe I shall like that little man in spite of his conceit."

A few minutes later we went down to breakfast, where we found Ned looking brighter and better already for our cheering presence in the house.

We informed him of our last night's adventure, at which he looked grave.

Presently he turned to the detective and said, "Now, Jensen, what is your candid opinion concerning that cottage? I can hardly think, in spite of its loneliness, and the local superstitions attaching to it, which serve to keep it undisturbed, that the thieves would make their rendezvous so near the village."

"I don't know," said the detective thoughtfully. "Boldness will sometimes throw the police off the scent, where the utmost caution would fail to blind them. But whether they are making use of it or not, it will never do to let them suppose that such an idea has entered our heads at present. The entrance of these gentlemen last night was premature, very premature. We must watch, if necessary, until they commit another robbery; then if, as I more than

suspect, they carry their stolen property to the cottage to hide it, why, we will just drop on them in the act."

"If it were left to me," said Giles, "I should go at once to the cottage, and give it a thorough overhaul."

"No, sir. We might find the valuables its true, but I mean to have the men, and I dare not do anything at present to arouse their suspicions. We have a more than usually cunning gang to deal with. I would sooner get the darbies safely on their wrists, than recover all the plate and jewellery in the county. But I hope to do both. You must have patience, sir; we shall not have long to wait, I fancy."

*(To be continued.)*

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## The Ideal House.

By JOHN STRANGE WINTER.

AS REGARDS THE STARTING POINT.

THE starting point of the ideal house must be, as a matter of course, the marriage of its occupants, and to begin with, we will suppose, for the sake of convenience, that the ideal house is the home of a newly married couple. It may be a modest house or a magnificent one, but in the face of the great question of its being an ideal house its size is a mere matter of detail. One may have an ideal house—a real home—in a tiny tiny flat in a very cheap quarter of London, or it may be in a lordly castle, or in the best part of Mayfair. It depends entirely upon its occupants whether it shall be ideal or not. Now I take it that it does not in the least matter when a couple are married whether they be high, low, rich or poor; whether the lady be like Rachel, comely and well-favoured, or like Leah, tender-eyed. It does not matter whether the young husband be a clerk in an office, a dashing subaltern in the Guards, an aspiring barrister, or a Member of Parliament. These things are mere details. The great and vital point is whether the young husband and wife are all in all to each other. Without this first great essential no home, however lordly, can be an ideal one.

Having started well, that is on the all-in-all principle, it is absolutely necessary that the young husband and wife shall not take everything for granted—that the husband shall not feel that there is nothing more to woo in his wife; that the wife shall not quietly accept as a certain fact that there is nothing on her side left for her husband to win.

The ambition of most girls is to be married. I am not speaking of those to whom untoward accidents may have happened, such as the death of a lover, the press of family circumstances, the breaking of an engagement, the many things which happen to make a great number of women feel that whatever they may do they will not choose to marry. I am speaking entirely of the natural instinct with which most girls start their young womanhood, and I say that it is a natural ambition and the ambition of most to be married, and to be married fairly soon. It is not, as a rule, so early an ambition with young men; but, a little time gone by, it is the haven to which most men look, or to which they find themselves drifting.

It is all rose-coloured at the start; yet married life is not easy. Young people have only to look back to the lives which they remember, and which have been enacted before them in the persons of their own parents, to know that marriage is not, to use a vulgar simile, "all beer and skittles." It is very difficult to learn to be married; for marriage is the up-rooting of everything, of the entire past life of both—husband as well as wife. It is not an easy thing to learn to accommodate yourself to the will and wishes of another person for an everlasting continuance. Married life does not consist of eight-hour days—they are all twenty-four. Likely enough the parents of neither have got on altogether without friction. Edwin probably thinks that his father and mother get along better than most; but he feels, when he is married to Angelina, that *she* will never make a fuss about the cigar smoke in the dining-room curtains, that nothing will ever happen to *his* dinner, and that when the cook gets drunk, Angelina will clear her out of the way before he comes back from business. Angelina, on her side, feels that whatever happens, her Edwin will never make her feel bad about money, as her papa periodically makes her mamma feel; she feels that Edwin will only be too eager to buy her things and indulge her from time to time, and that it will be a delight and a joy to be indulged as if she were a little girl with a new toy. And so it all works very well while it lasts—until there comes a

day when Edwin has not got a fiver to spend on Angelina's birthday present; another day when something has happened to the dinner; and a last more important day, when Angelina strongly objects to her husband joining the Freemasons, because he cannot tell her the secret. Believe me, it is not easy to be married! And well is it if Edwin never feels the shadow of Edwin the first, and Angelina never learns what it is to suspect the possible existence of an Angelina the second.

I have heard it said that marriage must be giving and taking. Too often these words, so excellent in theory, resolve themselves in practice into Edwin doing all the giving and Angelina doing all the taking. This, as a rule, only lasts for a time and results in dead failure. There must be giving and taking on both sides and in fully equal proportions.

To have a really ideal home our young couple must not carry the all-in-all idea too far; they must never run any idea to death; it is a fatal blunder. I knew a couple once who were all in all to each other. They really were—and I don't know that I ever despised any two human beings so thoroughly in the whole course of my life. Their all-in-allness was always to the front; you could never get rid of it; it was never out of sight for a moment. They had married on nothing—one does not blame them for that; many of the happiest marriages and most successful alliances have been started on a similar basis—but with this couple their affection for each other was their daily life; it was also, alas, the daily life of their children, and it was the periodical vexation of all their friends and acquaintances. This Angelina always wore the curls of her girlhood; we, as young people, irreverently called them "kinks." She was a strictly ornamental person—not of a type of beauty that I have ever admired myself—but she was his ideal. "Look at her," I have heard him say, *apropos* of nothing, in the midst of a large gathering of people; "would anybody think that she was the mother of fourteen children?" So far as Angelina's looks went, at the period to which I am referring, she might have been the mother of a hundred and fourteen children; but Edwin never seemed to see it! They lived a life of their own, apart from their family, apart from their children. They passed most of their time strictly in retirement, or they took long walks together; they went away alone; they did everything together, to the absolute exclusion of the fourteen children, who got themselves up as best they could,

the elder ones mothering the younger ones, stitching, sewing, slaving, fagging for them; the boys turning out and doing as well as circumstances permitted, with no help, no counsel, no wisdom from their father, beyond eternal praise of his Angelina. The girls drifted out in like manner. Debts accumulated, and were wiped off several times—you know the process—and still that maddening all-in-allness continued. "I sacrificed my whole career because I married young," I once heard this passionate patriarch exclaim, "but the mother of fourteen has more than made up to me for anything I might have done." Well, I don't know that he said exactly the "mother of fourteen," but that is what his tone conveyed, you know. Now, for my part, I think that this particular Angelina ~~would~~ have made a much more ideal wife had she been a little more useful instead of being so purely ornamental. While her husband was writing his sermons, she might at least have mended some of the stockings belonging to the fourteen. But no, it pleased her Edwin that she should always be dainty—a kind of airy fairy Lilian. At sixteen an airy fairy Lilian in a single page of print is a delightful creation; at sixty, in the every-day life of a family of sixteen on an income of some three hundred a year, she is absurd.

I think that in every situation where attainment is desirable—and what situation is there in which there is absolutely nothing to win in the future?—a climber should always bear in mind that there is a great danger ever present—the danger of climbing too far, of climbing so that he may topple over on the other side. The Edwin who buys pearls for Angelina when he ought to be paying the butcher's bill succeeds in doing this, and the Angelina who spends her whole life in an atmosphere of homage when her children's stockings are troubled with "potatoes," may be classed in the same category. All Edwin and Angelinas have other duties than towards each other, and the duties which go to make up an ideal married life do not stop with the pleasure which one takes in the society of the other.

I said just now that there should be giving and taking on both sides. A very curious instance of the want of that giving and taking came under my notice a short time ago. An Angelina that I know greatly desired to learn to ride a bicycle, and, like a good wife, she mooted the subject to her husband. His instant reply was, "Oh, no, don't; it is so dangerous; think if anything happened to you; pray don't dream of it!" And seeing that he really meant it she gave up her idea.

Within a week this Edwin came to Angelina and said, "Oh, Angelina, I have been offered a share in a yacht with three other men."

"What sized yacht?" said Angelina.

"Oh, just a small yacht."

"A steam yacht?" said Angelina.

"No, no, a little pleasure yacht—a ten-tonner. Desmond has got it for duck shooting along the coast. I wouldn't take the share without mentioning it to you, but I should enjoy it immensely."

"Is it a safe yacht?" said Angelina.

"No, I don't know that it is, particularly."

"Is it a safe coast?"

"Oh, well, the coast is rather dangerous."

"Oh," said Angelina, "I don't want to be disagreeable, but you objected to my learning to bike on account of the danger. One is not bound to have a smash on a bike, but I should never see you go out in that cockle-shell without living with my heart in my mouth until you were safely home again, and I strongly object to your taking that share in the yacht."

"Oh, of course, if you feel like that," said Edwin, "I won't dream of it; but the idea that you might be anxious never occurred to me."

Those who wish to lay the foundation of an ideal house must remember that it is never the large things which are difficult to manage. A great trouble is easily met, perhaps for the simple reason that it must be met, that we cannot get out of its road, cannot skirt round it, cannot surmount it, cannot creep under it, we *must* face it. There comes death into the house; there is but one course to take, it is that of endurance. There comes utter ruin; well, one knows the worst. It may be sheer misfortune, it may be carelessness, it may be miscalculation; the need is the same; the result is the same; and most Angelinas will buckle to and make the best of it.

But the small things are less easy to bear. I knew a wife once, a faded, querulous Angelina, who passed an existence of torture because Edwin would whistle. I know an Edwin, devoted to his wife, who feels at times positively murderous because she will play the Devil's tattoo upon any flat furniture that comes to hand. I know another Angelina, whose Edwin will always use her towels instead of his own. It is a small thing; Edwin has to walk across the room to get at her towels, and he is quite unconscious of what he does; but he does it all the same. I know another Edwin whose perpetual thorn is that all the

rubbish in the household is shot into his study. "My study," he says, "is a rubbish heap. It is a small thing; I might be just as happy to find Charlie's top among my letters and Gracie's doll occupying the chair on which I wish to sit, but it worries one, and every day the annoyance remains the same." I know another Edwin who adores his Angelina, and vexes his soul in season and out of season because she *will* discuss business; she will talk of stocks and shares, of Companies, of all manner of things of which she has absolutely no knowledge. I know yet another Angelina whose Edwin will persist in giving her the portion which she likes least at dinner. He is absolutely unknowing of this peculiarity. He will take a nice piece of the tail end of a sole and say "There, that is the part you like, dearest, isn't it?" Her particular fancy is the other end of the fish. At first she used to suffer in silence, at last she spoke; and therein she showed her wisdom. Married people should always speak, and speak quite plainly when anything that the other one does hurts or offends them. I know an Angelina who loathes roast mutton; it is actual penance to her to sit at a table graced by this particular food. In a small household it is not convenient always to have a second *plat*, and for ten years this poor woman immolated herself, at least once a week, on the altar of wifely duty. So nauseous to her was this particular dish, that she could never get through the few mouthfuls she forced herself to eat without liberal helpings of red currant jelly. At the end of ten years she happened to say quite casually "Well, I think we will have roast mutton; you are so fond of it." Edwin looked up in mild surprise. "I—I fond of roast mutton?" he said. "Oh, you are quite mistaken, Angelina, I only eat it to please you. I dislike it rather than otherwise." So ten years of self-immolation had passed merely for the want of putting the question plainly. Husbands and wives should never be afraid to speak to each other; such reticence can only lead to misunderstanding and eventually to friction.

All wives ought to have a housekeeping allowance and a dress allowance, and dates should be fixed and kept to rigidly when these sums should be paid without grumbling. I believe that a good half of the troubles of married life come from the fact that moneys are doled out grudgingly, especially those for the wife's personal requirements, whereas the wife has fully as much right to suitable allowances as she would have if she were only a paid housekeeper. No husband can give his wife more than he has got, but, if he expects a certain

style, he should be prepared to give the means of keeping up that style easily. I once knew an Edwin who bought ten pairs of gloves for himself and one for Angelina. That Edwin would have been all the better if some one had punched his head ! It was a wretched household, and presided over by an Angelina of many cares to whom Edwin was not a comfort but a taskmaster. I knew another household in which the Angelina gave thirty guineas for a sealskin coat when her Edwin had not a decent suit to wear. This Angelina happened to have a little income of her own, and she spent it religiously upon herself, no matter what state her husband's finances happened to be in. They parted years ago, and I, for one, have never blamed any shortcomings which I have heard attributed to that particular Edwin.

No one is perfect ; there will always be faults on both sides ; but do let all young people who are thinking and dreaming of the ideal house remember that the house will be as they themselves make it. It must be built upon a sure foundation. If the house is built upon a bog, that bog may shift at any moment ; if the house is built upon sand, upon certain kinds of clay, upon any insecure foundation, there is no knowing when it may give or crack in some corner or other ; but a house that is built upon the rock of mutual consideration is well nigh as sure as the stars are certain in their courses ; and for Edwin and Angelina to be all in all to each other, but with a due sense of what is meet and right, is to lay a safe foundation for the ideal house.

( To be continued. )

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## "Loyale je serais, durant ma vie."

By LUCY HARDY.

"What a quantity of old music!"

"It must have belonged to Helen when she was a girl."

The first speaker, a young wife of some twenty summers, continued to turn over a pile of the songs fashionable some twenty-five or thirty years ago; and occasionally struck a few notes of their accompaniment on a piano.

"Ruby," "The Little Wee Dog," "Little Bird";—this seems a pretty tune, Gerard," and the girl warbled a few notes from the last-named song, which relates how the 'little bird on the green tree' witnessed the parting of the lovers;—"What is he saying, and what answers she, *loyale je serais, durant ma vie.*"

"Helen learnt that ages ago when she was studying under Garcia, and I remember her singing it; it was a favorite song of my father's when I was a tiny boy," remarked the young man who stood by the piano.

"*Loyale je serais, durant ma vie,*" said Lillias Tresillian, "it is the woman who promises that."

"Come, little lady, it is *your* sex which is usually charged with fickleness," replied Gerard laughing, as he stooped to kiss the brow of his year-old wife. It had been a "love match" on both sides; and the pair had not yet outgrown their "honeymoon."

"I like that promise, it is better than the one given in the marriage service," said Lillias, as she struck a few chords half absently, "I hated that odious '*till death us do part*,' as I said it. '*Loyale je serais, durant ma vie.*' Gerard," turning suddenly to him, "if—if I were not with you always, would you *quite* forget me?—or remember me all your life long?"

"Sweetheart," said the young man earnestly, folding her in his arms as he spoke, "why will you talk in this dismal way? If we were parted—which is an awful thought we need not dwell upon for many a year to come—why the very light of my life would go out with you, *and you know it.* You are not about to become jealous, are you, my Lilly?"

Lilias laughed.

"It is silly and selfish I know, but somehow one does not like to think one will be forgotten."

"My heart's queen, never need fear that," said Gerard fondly (they were young still, and very much in love with each other.) "We mean to live to be a model old Darby and Joan; and whenever the end comes for one of us, I hope the other will be too aged to linger long lonely. Why I look forward to seeing you a stately old grandmother Lil—when the *heir's heir*——"

"What nonsense you talk," cried the young wife with a blush and a smile.

Fate had certainly been kind to the wedded couple. They were young, rich, devotedly attached to each other; and the last blessing—that of a child to inherit Sir Gerard's property, was shortly to be granted them. For centuries it had been a family tradition that the heir of the Tresillians should be born under the roof of the old family mansion in the West of England; and hither Gerard had brought his young wife for that happy summer at whose close he expected his firstborn child to see the light. The Tresillians were very popular in the neighbourhood; for generations they had been known as good landlords, kindly neighbours; and the expected event at the Hall was to be greeted with bell-ringing and festivities, as an occurrence of local importance and interest.

Summer waned into autumn; and with the roses a fairer flower passed away. It was in a muffled knell, not in a joyful peal, that the bells of the old church tower rang out on one dim September morning; and behind the shrouded windows of the Hall lay the dead girl-mother with her motionless babe on her quiet breast.

It was "awful to see poor Tresillian," all his friends sympathetically said, as the young husband—he was barely twenty-five—stood beside his wife's grave on the day of her funeral; in that calm, tearless, stony grief, which is more terrible to witness than any noisy demonstrations of sorrow. That the shock would kill him was freely whispered; and the presumptive heir to the estate (an elderly and somewhat dissolute cousin, who eked out his half-pay at foreign gambling tables, and who had utterly given up any hope of the succession when Gerard married), began now to wonder if fate was about to do him an unexpected good turn.

With a stern self repression, Gerard Tresillian refused to leave the

house which he had decorated and prepared for his bride ; although he shrank from entering *her* rooms, rooms which still bore so many traces of their loved former occupant. Rejecting sympathy, refusing to see visitors, the young man shut himself up with his grief, echoing George Elliott's words " here I and sorrow sit."

" You have carried my heart to the grave with you, my darling," he would whisper to himself, " and life must be dark to me hereafter till its end."

One interest and occupation still remained to the young widower. His darling should sleep under such a monument as had never before been seen in that quiet country churchyard. Gerard had not laid his wife—so young, so fair—in the dreary vault where generations of his ancestors rested ; he had chosen a spot in the open churchyard, where the early sunbeams fell, where the birds sang overhead, and the daisies blossomed around. Here his wife and his babe, and himself, when his turn came, should rest ; but above Lilius' grave should rise a monument which should fittingly commemorate his love as well as his loss. Marble, pure as the sleeper's heart, should be cunningly wrought and carved in her honour ; and Gerard, who himself was something of an artist, pleased himself by sketching out the design of a graceful memorial ; where marble lilies should blossom over their namesake, and the artist's hand illustrate the husband's love. The work itself was to be entrusted to a famous Italian sculptor, whose studio the wife and husband had visited together when on their bridal tour ; Lilius had then laughingly said that she should like to possess a specimen of Signor ——'s skill ; Gerard would place one now over her grave. There was a sort of consolation in this almost wasteful profusion—this erecting of costly sculpture in a remote country graveyard, where the rustics, who would, save himself, be its only beholders, were utterly incapable of appreciating its merits. But who does not know the feeling which prompts us to lavish with loving reckless hands our best and costliest upon our beloved dead—to honour the silent sleepers according to our love, rather than with regard to their present knowledge of that love ?

So the commission for a fair monument, regardless of cost, was duly transmitted to Florence ; and graciously accepted by the famous sculptor. But a long series of delays retarded its execution. Signor —— possessed a European reputation, and had other commissions—some from crowned heads—to execute in advance of

Gerard's; and it is needless to say that the great man was not to be hurried or dictated to. Then, when the sculptor was at leisure to think about this humbler commission, there was much further delay in procuring a block of marble of the peculiar kind and purity desired; for Signor —— had all an artist's pride in his works, small as well as great; and was resolved to fully act up to the only instructions given him by his English client, viz., to make the memorial as perfect as possible, regardless of cost. Then the exact design of the monument; the tall slender cross, with its clustering lilies at the base, the exquisite tracery, the delicate carvings, were all to be discussed and settled betwixt artist and client; and so the months sped away, and Gerard's impatience was not yet gratified by seeing the memorial of his love placed over the grave, which he never failed to visit daily.

It was a long, terrible winter; and the young widower, shut up as an absolute recluse, excited the sympathy, also the gossip, of the neighbourhood. Was he going mad—melancholy mad—with grief?

One day in the early spring Gerard was surprised by a visit from his married sister, his only surviving relation. She was over twenty years his senior—there seemed to have been a fatality about the birth of male heirs to the Tresillians for the last two generations; Gerard himself had entered the world years after his parents had given up hopes of possessing a second child; and his birth had cost his mother her life. His sister Helen had well supplied this parent's place, and had never left the old home until the death of their father, some five years before Gerard's marriage. Then Miss Tresillian, long past her first youth, had made a suitable and calmly happy union, with a middle-aged diplomatist, with whom she left England. Sir William Beltram was holding an appointment in the East at the time of Gerard's marriage and widowhood, so Lady Beltram could only express her sympathy with her brother by letter; but now her husband had been transferred to Vienna the accounts given of Gerard's condition by mutual friends, decided Lady Beltram on making a sudden descent upon her brother, and forcing him to return with her to the gay Austrian capital.

For a while Gerard resolutely withstood her pleadings, but yielded at length. He was much attached to his sister, she had always possessed great influence over him; and, truth to tell, there was beginning to spring up in his heart a certain weariness of his present life—*perhaps a little of his sorrow.*

Spring had come, and Nature was awakening from her winter sleep; there was a kind of infectious brightness in the very air and sunshine. So, though (as Gerard often reminded his sister), "his heart was buried with his lost Liliás," he was partly persuaded, partly forced (Lady Beltram was a woman of very resolute purpose) to accompany her back to Vienna.

Lady Beltram was very wise in her management. In her own secret heart she had quite resolved that this early "boy and girl attachment" was not to spoil her brother's after career; she herself was a very unromantic person, and had little sympathy with what she called "sentiment." If poor Liliás had lived, no doubt she would have made Gerard a good enough wife; but this romantic folly of perpetually grieving over her tomb was too absurd. "*Le roi est mort—vive le roi,*" was Lady Beltram's philosophy; her brother was a young man still, and had a career before him.

But Lady Beltram was too wise a woman to betray her sentiments to her brother; she listened, with at least an appearance of interest, to the oft-repeated stories of the trivial acts and words of the departed which flow so naturally from the lips of mourners; she never forced her brother into society, never rebuked him for his grief, but yet never relaxed from her settled purpose to make the memory of his past life—and love—a dead and buried thing.

And Gerard was not proof against her influence, and that of the new scenes and surroundings amid which he found himself. Love, as he often told himself, was at an end for himself now, but ambition remained; and, merely as a means of stifling his sorrow by employment, he was persuaded to accept an appointment in the diplomatic service, of which Sir William's interest procured him the offer; and then his duties naturally forced him into society, and he met Charlotte Carrington.

It is easy to guess the sequel; Miss Carrington, a clever, brilliant, attractive woman, older for her twenty-four years than was Gerard for his twenty-six, decided that a marriage with the handsome and wealthy young widower would suit her well enough, and played her cards accordingly; warmly seconded by Lady Beltram, who desired nothing better for her brother than such a capable and well-born, if not well-endowed wife.

"Gerard's own fortune is ample, and Charlotte is just the woman to be invaluable to him in a political career," remarked Lady Beltram

to her husband. Was the memory of a tomb in England, of a dead girlish face, to come between Gerard and his life's prospects?

Tresillian believed himself constant for a long time—he often told himself it was his ambition, not his heart, which was influenced by Charlotte. Even when he made his proposal he spoke of his earlier love; and dwelt rather upon his deep esteem, his high regard, than on his devoted *affection* for herself.

Miss Carrington secretly smiled a little as she listened. She was even more unromantic than Lady Beltram; it was her lover's position and estate which she was desirous of sharing—devoted affection did not enter much into her category of matrimonial advantages. Also, she knew her own powers of fascination, and Gerard's weakness.

"I can make that foolish fellow madly in love with me if I choose," thought the haughty beauty, with a self-satisfied smile. And her words proved true; for Gerard, who had in truth seen but little of the world, speedily became abjectly enslaved to his clever, worldly-wise, bride elect; who knew so well how to play upon him for her own purposes. That tender, simple idyll of his first marriage was being rapidly forgotten under the spells of the newly-found Circe.

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Fifteen months had passed away since Lilius Tresillian's golden head had been laid under the daisies, and the old West Country churchyard was again full of village spectators, but this time of joyful ones. It was Gerard Tresillian's second wedding day; and, by an unexpected chain of circumstances, it chanced that this bridal was to take place in the Church of his native village.

Charlotte Carrington's father had, unexpectedly (as "next of kin"), inherited a small estate contiguous to that of his future son-in-law; and nothing would satisfy the bride elect but an orthodox "country wedding," with all the pomp and circumstance which attends such festivities in the families of country magnates. Gerard agreed to her wish in this as in all other respects; his infatuation, was at present, complete.

Amid the eager crowd assembled at the Church to greet the arrival of the bride and bridegroom, no one heeded the operations of a small party of workmen who had arrived from London by an early train, and who were now engaged in a remote corner of the churchyard, in setting up a monument. The villagers who lined each side of the pathway to the Church, (children with flowers to strew before the bride

being placed in the foremost row) were far too occupied in looking for the arrival of the wedding party to concern themselves about anything which was taking place behind them in the churchyard.

The bridal party duly arrived and entered the little church, which was immediately crowded almost to suffocation by the concourse of onlookers. Mr. McLeod, the elderly family lawyer, who had come from London to attend the wedding ceremony, and whose train had arrived late, came up to find the very church porch crammed with spectators. The old lawyer had attended too many weddings in his time to be especially keen about squeezing in to witness this one; he stood contentedly outside in the churchyard, and thus attracted the attention of the foreman in charge of the workmen.

"Beg pardon, sir," said this individual, coming up, "but do you know if Sir Gerard Tresillian is at the Hall now; you remember me, from Messrs. Blank's"—naming the firm of stone-masons who had been entrusted with the erection of Lilius' monument after it should arrive in England, and with whom Mr. McLeod had often held communications on the subject.

"A nice trouble we have had with the Signor and his delays about the carving," went on the man, "I often thought the monument would never come at all. However, it has arrived at last, and, Sir Gerard's orders being so particular about its being set up the very moment it *did* come to hand, we started off by the early train to-day to do the job. And most uncommon well it looks now it is up; if Sir Gerard was at home—he was just going abroad when we last heard from him—I thought I'd call to tell him it is finished. He'd may be like to see it."

"Sir Gerard is in England now, in fact he is in the Church at the present moment," said Mr. McLeod, rather drily.

"Then I might speak to him as he comes out," said the foreman; ignorant that the "grand wedding" had any connection with his patron.

"I don't think I'd just do that, my man," said the old Scotchman, yet more drily, "because you see, the monument you've just set up is one to Sir Gerard's *first* wife, and what he's doing in the Church now is *marrying a second!*"

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The organ pealed forth the "Wedding March" and the joy bells clashed out as the newly wedded pair passed down the Church path

under the lime trees. In the background, the rays of the wintry sunshine flickered and danced upon one of the most exquisite of funeral monuments; the Signor had even surpassed himself in this last work. But the man whose "broken heart" had bespoken that costly trophy had no eyes or thought for it now, as he gazed lovingly upon the proud beautiful woman who walked by his side.

The dead "find their true graves in our short memories," wrote Sir Thomas Browne over two centuries ago. Perhaps it is well that this should be so; at least the possessors of such "short memories" are spared the pain known to those who make and keep the vow "Loyale je serais, durant ma vie."

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## The Voice in the Thunder.

By E. LESTER-JONES.

It was one of those perfect summer evenings in which heaven and earth seem to meet. For a moment we could fancy there were angel voices in our midst. A solemn stillness reigned. The air was heavy with the perfume of flowers and the scent of the newly mown hay. There had been a suspicion of thunder, but the threatened storm was long in coming.

A strange drowsiness came over me, and in an almost miraculous way I was far from my home and its surroundings, while still the faces I knew were near me, and the voices I loved distinct though distant.

Suddenly a vivid flash of lightning filled the room with an almost ethereal glow, and at the same moment I found myself in my brother's room at Highgate, where, surrounded by his books and papers he was studying for his final exam.

The lightning was followed by a loud clap of thunder, and as its echoes died away they mingled with a voice familiar and dear.

It was my brother's. I knew it well.

"Come to me, Edmund, You only can save me."

I started: with one hand pushed aside my dishevelled hair—

with the other grasped, in my agitation, the table cover by my side. I glanced around. The room was in wild confusion. My father, disturbed in his nap, was looking for the spectacles he had pushed up on his forehead. My mother dropped her knitting—then sat in speechless amazement. The younger members of the family, half inclined to laugh, finally decided to wait and see how events would shape themselves. I thought at first they must have heard the call. I had yet to learn there are voices only a few may hear, forms only a few may see, and signs understood only by those who have experienced their terrible teaching.

"Good-bye all," I exclaimed. "I will telegraph directly I reach Highgate. If I am very quick I may be in time to save the poor boy."

"Edmund, have you gone mad? Explain yourself. I dislike melodrama," my father broke in.

"I have nothing to explain. Charlie called me and I must go."

"Don't be foolish, my son. Upon my word I thought you had more sense. The thunder has made you fanciful. You were dreaming and the last loud clap awoke you."

"No, father, I was not dreaming. Oh! don't let me delay. What if he should die before I could reach him!" and looking at my watch I exclaimed eagerly, "I have barely time to catch the train."

At this my mother spoke. Years have passed since that night, but I see her now as she stood before me *then*. Tears stood in her tender old eyes: the hand she placed upon my shoulder shook.

"My lad, do not go to-night. Wait until the morning. If you are then persuaded Charlie wants you, nothing shall keep you from him."

"But, mother you believe in God. It is He who called me. I must obey."

My mother looked shocked. Her religion taught her that God must be spoken of with reverence. Then she said gently, as usual, "Poor boy, you are not well, rest quietly here, and the illusion will pass."

I looked at her and as I looked my resolution wavered. Perhaps there was nothing in the call; at any rate, I would wait.

The others returned to their music and cards, glancing at me occasionally as though they half dreaded a repetition of the scene. But they had no need to fear. With the consciousness that it was

now too late to go, my power of will forsook me and I took my seat, feeling I had lost something I should never find again. I heard the music in the distance but it had no power to charm me then. At last I retired, but not to sleep. All night I tossed from side to side, waiting for the morning light. At last it came. But the darkness is never so full of gloom to the weary watcher, as is the first early streak of dawn. No presentiment of trouble so keenly felt, as when the dull stone colour first steals across the horizon.

I jumped from my couch and eagerly began to dress. Then crept noiselessly down the steps, beckoning my dog Roy to follow me. I feared his wail of sorrow at my departure might awake the sleeping household. I hurried on towards the station. I had long to wait, but it did not matter. The time must pass, and do what I would the moments drag.

At last I was in the train. Oh! joy, to think that every moment was bringing me nearer to his side.

Then I prayed—prayed that again I might hear the voice, or at least I might have some token that my brother still lived. But nothing came.

At length Paddington was reached. I jumped into a hansom, saying to the man "Drive on, I'll tell you when to stop."

I put my hand to my head. The name of the street was gone. I waited, and it came back. I told the driver, concluding with "Put on extra speed, I'll pay you!" What mattered the life of a poor beast, when a soul was lying in the balance!

The air was chill and damp. The few yellow leaves which still hung upon the trees in the London parks looked dry and shrivelled. How unlike the country scene I had left behind. Men and women shivered as they hurried to their work. An organ grinder produced "Home Sweet Home" in mournful strains, which struck a chill to my heart. If what I feared had happened, home would be no longer sweet to me. And what of the mother waiting anxiously for tidings of her boy? Would she care to live without her Benjamin? But no, it could not be. I had heard the voice. Was I not coming in answer to its call? Yes, but when? Hours after its beseeching tones had reached me. Arrived at my destination I paid the cabman and rang the bell.

Why is it, in moments of anxiety, every tiny detail is for ever stamped upon the memory? Even now I can see the children

teazing a poor half-starved mongrel, and I remember to this day how I longed to take him home and feed him. I wondered why people would not draw their blinds up evenly, and saw with disquietude that the girl who opened the window and looked down at me, had her hair in curl papers and was altogether slovenly in appearance. There must be something strange about me, for as she looked she gave a loud scream, then mysteriously disappeared. She was so long in returning that I rang, and rang again. My mind was filled with terrible forebodings, and instead of sorrow, anger was now in my heart.

"Why have you kept me so long? I want to see my brother. Where is he?"

She threw up her hands and gesticulated wildly.

"Your brother! Oh! my God, I thought it was Mr. Charlie come back."

There was nothing to be gained from this girl, so throwing ceremony to the winds I pursued my way. Some one was cooking fish; the smell attracted me, and I entered the kitchen. Instinctively I knew it was the landlady.

"Well, sir, it is no use to blame me for what has happened," she began with a poor pretence at bravado. "It is true the doctor said 'Call him at seven or the morphia will do its deadly work,' but I overslept. My God! it was not my fault, I loved the young gentleman as if he was my own son, and I would not have hurt a hair of his head. But he would work and work away at those terrible books. If this is what is coming of sending the young people to the Board Schools, then I'd rather see them dunces."

She had rambled on, trying to hide her feelings, but nature asserted herself at last, and she burst into tears. I wanted to ask her where my brother was, but the words would not come. Instinct guided me to the room, where lay the books and papers I had seen in the vision, but the figure which gave life to the scene was gone. I went up higher, opened another door, and entered. Charlie lay upon the bed apparently asleep. His lips were parted in a smile, a smile of reproach. I touched his brow, it was icy cold.

My God! was he dead, and I his murderer!

I covered my eyes with my hands. I tried to shut out the awful sight, but that look would follow me. Must I see it for ever? And why was I the one to hear the voice? Was I alone guilty?

Poor lad! To think that he had called, had waited for the brother who had been his life companion, but who had turned a deaf ear to his cry!

"Charlie, dear boy, I am come at last. Am I too late? Oh! come back to me and forgive," I cried in an agony, but no answer came. Still the eyes looked at me with a reproach which held no bitterness in it.

The medical student who had administered the morphia entered. He was a friend of both. I took his hand in silence.

"Edmund, all would have been well, but Mrs. Brown forgot to call him. Poor lad, he had suffered so terribly from this dreadful neuralgia, and he was so anxious to pass his final. I wanted him to sleep, and he begged me so hard. Oh! what shall I do without him?"

"Rawson, you acted for the best. No one can blame you. But what of me? Oh! it is dreadful to have heard the voice, to have seen his beseeching look, and not to have heeded them! My God! my God! is there any agony on earth equal to remorse?" and falling back I sank into a deathlike-swoon.

An illness followed from which I was long in recovering, and when bodily strength returned, a cloud hid the terrible scene from my recollection.

At last the cloud was lifted, but the poignancy of my grief was gone, though ever and anon I can still hear the voice which came with the thunder, calling in mournful cadence, "Edmund, come to me, you only can save me!"

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## St. Valentine's Day.

And does it come and pass unheeded now,  
The good Saint's day, before whose magic shrine  
The lads and lasses loved of old to bow?—  
Is he forgotten now, Saint Valentine?

Times change and fashions alter; and no more  
When February's fourteenth day is here,  
Do laden postmen, as in days of yore,  
Bring sealed surprises sent by lover's dear.

O, mingled memories of the vanished past  
That cling and cluster round the pensive mind,  
As years advancing and receding fast,  
Leave scanty relics of this day behind.

*Then* Cupid reigned a King in peerless pride,  
And lavished hearts fantastically blent  
With Love's emblazoned emblem far and wide!  
And gifts and greetings were by thousands sent!

*Then* amorous swains did choose their sweethearts true,  
And pledged the troth that did their lives entwine;  
O sweet the question, old yet ever new,  
"Wilt thou be mine, dear little Valentine?"

*Now* carking cares and nineteenth century ways,  
And sordid strife, and selfish greed of gain  
Have killed quaint customs of the former days—  
Dead is Romance and comes no more again.

Yet still in honour of this slighted day,  
The slender tribute of a poet's line,  
The lowly offering of this simple lay  
Shall meekly lie on Memory's mystic shrine.

For why should longings of the human heart  
Languish, and sentiment's fond fancies die?  
And Love's sweet poetry from life depart?  
Why should this be? And echo answers "why?"

REV. JOHN HUDSON, M.A.

# Elfreda:

A TALE OF THE CORNISH SEAS.

By C. HORNBY.

## CHAPTER I.

It was a wild dark night, a night when most folks remained indoors.

The wind roared, shrieked and howled, and blew the tall larches round Squire Trewenna's home until they bent their proud heads almost to the earth. Overhead the low inky clouds scurried and chased each other before the blast, at times sweeping the cliffs with their wet misty touch, and mingling with the salt spray that dashed against the rocks below. The tide was up, the breakers reared their angry foaming crests high into the air, then dashed with a loud report like that of distant thunder on to the shingle, splashing and covering the wet black rocks with soapy froth; then again receding with sullen rebellion to give place to the next, and so on through the night, backwards and forwards, roaring and tumbling in unison with the blast of Heaven's trumpets overhead.

God protect those ships that are driven on shore, for certain death awaits them: those gaunt, black precipitous cliffs show mercy to none, and the dark boiling waters await their victims with yawning hungry jaws.

"Trewenna's Cove" was famed as being the most dangerous bit of coast from Tintagel to Land's End. All who know the Cornish seas, must know it too, for did not six hundred lives come to an untimely end there? In fair weather the Cove offers a goodly shelter for the smuggling craft, as the Trewenna folk know to their cost, for as yet it lay hidden from the eyes of the "Revenue Officers," who are not sharp enough to guess that behind those dark cliffs lies a safe anchorage in fair weather, or that the quiet little village harbours aught but peaceful fishermen, solely intent upon their nets and boats. But in rough weather the Trewenna folk lift up their hearts in prayer as they kneel in the little square-towered, age-blackened church, and say from their hearts, "Good Lord, deliver those upon the deep."

And now the wind roars louder, the gale is at its height, and two terrible things have happened to the Trewenna folks. The Angel of Death has visited Squire Trewenna's home, his baby daughter, his heart's darling has been snatched from him, and his broken-hearted wife lies sick unto death; while the tiny quivering twinkling light far out at sea signals danger and distress, and unless help comes swiftly, the gallant ship struggling so bravely 'midst the waves must soon be dashed to pieces on the rocks. All hold their breath horror-stricken; is the strange craft to be dashed to pieces before their eyes? They are all sons and daughters of the sea, and their kindly hearts ache for their brethren in distress.

Suddenly a voice pierces the darkness, rising above the roar of the wind and the thunder of the waves. It is a voice in which passion and emotion are strangely blended, a young voice that falls like a command from Heaven on the silent watching group. "Will no one—no one help them? Men! can you stand by and see your fellow-creatures perish? Will no one venture and help me launch the boat?"

"I tell you it is impossible, no boat could live in such a sea as this," a hoarse voice shouts in answer, and a low murmur goes from mouth to mouth.

"Cowards, shame on you," cries the mellow young voice again. "Can it be that ye are Cornishmen? Oh! my God, she is on the rocks! If no one will go, I at least will venture." Even as his passionate appeal is borne away by the angry blast, wild cries of despair arise from the doomed vessel. There is a sudden shout, an answering one from the shore, as a dozen sturdy Cornishmen with one accord seize the swaying lifeboat already breasting the surf, and jump into her, headed by their young leader, and amid the cheers of all she is launched, launched among those boiling angry breakers which sweep tumultuously across her deck, and threaten to swamp her again and again. But there are brave hearts aboard, and strong arms and willing hands; who, even as they pull with all their strength, send up a prayer to Heaven that their souls may be saved, and that they may accomplish what they have begun.

"On, on, cheerily, cheerily, lads!" cries their leader, his young face pale as death, his blue eyes flashing with a strange fire. "We shall save them yet, please God;" and then silence reigns, for all their strength is needed as they reach the bar, over which the boiling breakers are thundering.

Will they succeed? Those on shore hold their breath, some of the women cover their faces and sob hysterically.

"Jack, Jack!" cries one—she is but a girl, and her golden hair sweeps round her like a cloud—"Oh! my God, save him, save him!" she moans as she sinks on her knees on the wet sand.

"Now, then for it—steady," shouts the imperious voice, hoarse and faint now, for his strength is all but spent.

A wild whirring noise sounds in the ears of the crew, a huge mass of foam hovers over them for a second, and then with a roar it is upon them, then all is darkness. But again the brave little craft rises, struggling onwards, panting and breathless; two of her crew have been washed overboard, but their life-belts have enabled them to scramble in again. Still they struggle on: the wreck is quite near now, the screams of the drowning souls pierce the night air. One, two, three, are dragged over the taffrail, and a fourth and a fifth. To save the rest is a sheer impossibility, even the brave lad who leads them has to acknowledge that. Suddenly something catches his eye, a tiny object tossing on the heaving waters.

"Row, men, row," he cries with determination. "One more effort; don't leave a child to perish." The words take effect, the brave fellows make one more mighty effort and the child is hauled on board, and once more they turn the boat's head towards the shore.

She is, oh! such a mite, perhaps four years old, with long, wet tangled hair, and a ghastly pale little face. At last the shore is reached, and a dozen ready hands are trying to restore life to the half-dead souls.

"And this little one, where is she to go to?" asks a motherly looking woman, rocking the child in her arms and chafing the icy little hands.

"To the Court, to Squire Trewenna's," says the boy who led the others. "It was for him and his poor lady that I brought her; I say she is to be taken to him."

Some demurred, but no one had any other suggestion to make, so the little shipwrecked waif was taken to the Court, and the rest dispersed to their different homes.

## CHAPTER II.

It is thirteen years since the Trewenna folk were clustered on the beach to watch the lifeboat on its noble errand of rescue. Some of them who watched are dead, some have gone to foreign shores to seek their fortunes, and others have grown into men and women; but none can talk of that night without a shudder, or think of it without a sigh.

It is autumn, and the waters of the Cove lie glistening in the afternoon sunshine, a long line of white waves mark where the tide has receded to: below the cliffs the yellow sand lies bare and soft as velvet, the gentle breeze brings a scent of seaweed and wild thyme with it, while the tall larches wave gently to and fro. The old grey-stoned house, nestled beneath the brow of the hill, is Trewenna Court. There seems to be no life anywhere, everything is so still, so peaceful. But what is there to hurry or hasten those quiet west-country people, who live the same prosaic, humdrum life year after year—the harvest alone breaking the monotony of the summer, and Christmas the winter, while wrecks and country fairs follow each other in unvaried succession.

But suddenly the sound of singing breaks the silence, a fresh, pure girlish voice echoes among the trees; it is so full of happiness that it awakens its hearers suddenly to the pleasure of living.

Elfreda Trewenna comes slowly down the garden path, her hands are full of freshly-cut flowers—she looks almost like a flower herself with her slender, lissom figure, and pure, fair young face: she is not lovely, but she has a pair of deep, clear, gray eyes, straight, clear-cut nose, a firm yet wholly sweet little mouth, and a small head covered with thick glossy curls of chestnut brown hair. No one has ever called her pretty, and she was seventeen to-day, but then, who was there at the Cove to pay compliments. True all the fisher folk loved, nay, worshipped her, and the white-haired vicar would often pat her curly head and say "God bless you, my child;" and Squire Trewenna would have kissed the ground she walked on, but then he had never thought to tell her she was pretty, perhaps he did not know it himself; and Miss Jané Trewenna, the squire's sister, who had lived and kept house for him since his wife's death, would have thought it sinful to talk of "looks." In her heart of hearts she loved

Elfreda, but that did not prevent her from greatly disapproving of her also.

"It is dreadful the way the child is allowed to run wild," she would say to herself, for there was no one else to say it to. But it was no good talking, not the least in the world, and Elfreda still ran over the cliffs at her own sweet will, and paddled bare-foot in the pools left by the tide, for there was no one to tell her that she had left childhood behind, and that she must alter her ways and compose her spirits, as befitting her advanced years.

She was seventeen to-day, this day last year she had been sixteen, and this day next year she would be eighteen, but to her it was all the same. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

Soon Elfreda became tired of the garden, so after running indoors to take up her large shady straw hat and clap it on to the top of her wavy hair, she wended her way through the apple orchard, down the little steep sandy lane that led out of it, and on to the broad strand of firm yellow sand.

The tide was still far out, and Elfreda walked on humming a little tune to herself from very lightness of heart. How enjoyable it was, the cool salt breeze ruffled her hair, and a delicate colour crept into her rounded cheeks and deepened and darkened her gray eyes, until they shone like twin stars. But Elfreda walked on all unconscious that she looked beautiful, that her slender figure in the rough serge skirt and red knitted jersey—the sort that the fisher lads wore—made a spot in the landscape that would have delighted a painter's eye. Elfreda did not know this, how was it possible that she should? She was a good walker, and her light footsteps traversed the firm sand quickly, and unheeding how the time sped: when she paused to look round she was startled to see how low the sun was, and that Trewenna Church was lost to sight. She had, unknown to herself, rounded the point, and had roamed five or six miles from home, but she felt warm from walking, and had no inclination to start on her backward journey yet, so she strolled towards the mouth of a large cavern in the side of the cliff, and threw herself down on the soft slippery seaweed. Inside it was cool and refreshing: she had never been there before, although she had explored the numerous caves that abounded in the "Cove."

Elfreda got interested as she went further and further down the narrow vaulted pathway, smaller and smaller narrowed the path but

still she crept on, never looking back or she would have seen the entrance was lost to sight, although there had been no turn in the path. Suddenly darkness confronted her! Elfreda stooped and crawled through the tiny archway. Yes! at last her patience was rewarded, the cavern had opened out into a large square room, with a high vaulted ceiling; room after room Elfreda passed through, and not until total darkness had almost set in did it occur to her that she had lost her way. How to get back without a light, and what was that?

She had run up against something large and hard, a chest studded with iron rings. A chest, yes it could be nothing else; Elfreda remembered having seen a chest with iron rings in old Ben Davis's cottage. Now she had tumbled upon something else, something hard yet not wood or iron. "Sacks," mentally ejaculated Elfreda as she passed her hand over them a second time, and then she knew where she was. It came upon her with a queer little thrill of surprise and terror; she was in the cave, the cave that she had heard Squire Trewenna speak of, the cave where the smugglers kept their goods, the cave many had tried to find, and had never been able to. Elfreda felt her heart beat quickly; supposing the smugglers should find her, what would they do? No thought of fear entered the girl's head, only one of great surprise, tinged with curiosity.

She had heard of smugglers all her life, and had often seen the "Revenue Cutters" pass by the mouth of the "Cove," and had listened breathless to the tales of smugglers' daring, and once she had heard the Squire say something about what a pity it was that young Penlaron had developed into such a wild reckless youth, and had joined them. Penlaron, it was a strange name, yet well known about Trewenna.

Three times Elfreda vainly tried to retrace her steps and find her way out, but each attempt only seemed to carry her further away from where she wanted to go. Once she started up from the sack where she sat with a sudden terror; it seemed as though she heard the splash of water near. Hurriedly she groped her way into the next room, but everything was as silent as the grave; then something else caught her quick ears, and Elfreda felt a hot wave of colour mount to her face. She heard men's voices distinctly; would they kill her, she wondered, if they found she knew their secret.

She put her hand to her throat to prevent a little cry of horror escaping her.

Meanwhile the voices came nearer, and now Elfreda heard footsteps as well.

"About seven this evening," one voice said.

"Very well, don't forget to give the signal."

Should she crouch down behind the chest or remain standing until they came nearer. Surely they would not kill her, she thought a little wildly to herself. Here they come—two tall muscular figures—lighted lanterns in their hands. Elfreda stood motionless her heart thumping to suffocation.

"The devil, and who have we here?" the girl heard a gruff voice exclaim, and then somebody seized her wrists and dragged her forward; but Elfreda would not scream, she only compressed her lips tighter together and glanced fearlessly upwards with her great gray eyes.

"I am Elfreda Trewenna, and I have lost my way," she said in her fearless voice.

For a minute there was an astonished silence; the man who held her wrist let go and started back.

"Miss Trewenna! is it possible? Good heavens, how came you here?" It was another voice that spoke, a voice ripened and mellow with a deep ring in it, and a tall figure strode forward, and held the lantern so that the light fell full on the girl's face.

Derrick Penlaron gazed fixedly at the slim young figure with a startled expression in his deep blue eyes.

"I have lost my way, indeed I did not mean to come here; I swear I will never utter a word as to where I have been." Elfreda threw back her bare curly head as she spoke, for she had left her hat on the top of the wooden chest, and looked first at one and then at the other of the two men, while her gray eyes flashed with mingled defiance and excitement.

"Ye can't go back, 'tis against the law. Penlaron, she must come to Mother Noates," said the other angrily, in a deep gruff voice, "she'll split on us, sure as a gun." He was a great big burly fellow, unkempt, clad in rough serge, with a broad brimmed brigandish looking hat on the top of his thick tangled hair.

"Get out with you, Jervis, what rot are you taking now? Of course Miss Trewenna is to be trusted, I myself will take her

back," answered the young man angrily, his blue eyes still fixed on Elfreda's white young face.

"Ye will swear as ye'll never split, ye'll swear to it on yer sacred oath; if ye do, remember, ye shall suffer for it, we ain't particular ye know."

"Have I not said so, I never break my word," said the girl quietly, fixing her big eyes on the man's face and throwing out one hand as though to emphasize her words; then she turned to Penlaron, "Will you help me to find my way, please? Indeed," with earnest entreaty in her eyes, "you may trust me to keep silence."

"I do trust you with all my heart, Miss Trewenna, but I wish to God that you had never come here."

As they emerged from the cave Elfreda looked at her rescuer curiously. She had heard him called Penlaron. Was this the one whom the Squire had talked of; was it possible he was a smuggler, a breaker of the law? And in truth Derrick Penlaron was good to look at: at sixteen he had been known as Daring Derrick, and was then a tall lad for his age, now he stood over six feet by three inches, proportionately broad, with square massive shoulders. His blue eyes, as deep and dark as his own Cornish seas, were his most striking feature, for the rest he had a strong face with straight, clear cut features, with lips and chin guiltless of hair, and his skin tanned to a golden brown from exposure to all weathers. There was a quick keen expression about his face that came from constant worry and watching, a bold frankness that told of a fearless character, common to those wild careless sons of the sea, who fear neither law nor danger in any form, and he in his turn glanced curiously at the tall slim maiden with the wistful eyes, the same, the very same who had lain in his arms half drowned, nearly thirteen years ago, and now she was Miss Trewenna, a lady bred if not born, but how did he know that she was not a nobleman's daughter, how could anyone know? And he, what was he? A wild lawless fellow, whom people talked of with grave faces, hunted by man as a wild beast, accused of drunkenness, his character stained with suspicion of dark crimes by ready tongues; then somehow it came upon him that he would rather that these stories did not come to the ears of the girl beside him. Would her great trustful eyes still look at him with the same confidence? He doubted it.

And now the Cove was reached, and Penlaron slackened his speed.

"The Court is close by, you cannot mistake your way now. I must come no farther." Elfreda held out her hand, a cool slender nut brown hand, and stood silently looking up at him.

"I thank you very much for what you have done," she said gently. "I shall never utter a word about this night, believe me."

"I do believe you, I wish there was no cause for such secrecy, and—and farewell Miss Trewenna, remember that all of us are not so bad as we are painted."

With that he was gone, while Elfreda stood with outstretched hand, which he had never taken, then turned and rather sadly made her way home.

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### CHAPTER III.

OF course Elfreda was scolded by Miss Trewenna for her prolonged absence, but not a word passed the girl's lips as to where she had been, in spite of the old lady's repeated and angry questions.

Summer was gone at last, and winter, cruel, cold winter came, bringing with it gales, storms and wrecks. The Trewenna folk shook their heads, and said it was going to be a bad winter for man and beast.

Life at the Court went on as it had always done; the wind groaned and shrieked around it, rattling the ivy on its walls, and shaking the rotten old chimneys and loose tiles on the roof, until Elfreda was obliged to cover her ears with her hands, as she lay on her narrow bedstead and listened to the roar of the breakers as they broke on the shore. But Elfreda was not as bright as usual, and she would jump at the sound of a door banging, and shudder if the wind howled more than usual, and once when guns were heard firing far out to sea, she turned very white, and crept from the room where Miss Trewenna was working.

She never walked on the sands now, but traced her footsteps far inland, away from the roar of the surf. It was now that something happened to Elfreda, something which she never forgot all her life long.

It was the 18th of November, and the tree tops and bold headlands were lost in a cold white mist that swept in from the sea. The wind had fallen, and the bay was singularly calm, but the water looked grey and sullen, and the breakers roared louder than usual.

Inside the Court everything looked warm and comfortable, the Squire was busy with his magisterial work, and Miss Trewenna sat knitting beside the dining-room fire. Elfreda was out! When the Squire heard of it, he jumped up hastily. "Out—out of doors in such a mist, the tide rapidly coming in and the wind rising. Good heavens, the child must be mad." Already the church clock had struck the hour of nine, and outside was pitch blackness.

Soon all the village knew that Elfreda was missing, and lanterns were seen flitting here and there upon the downs, but when Derrick Penlaron heard of it his bronzed cheek grew pale, and his blue eyes flashed, as, buckling on his oilskins and catching up a dark lantern, he hurried forth: he of all those anxious seekers guessed where the squire's darling was, yet he kept silence and spoke to no one as he hurried on. He knew that Ben Davis, Peter Gourney and the rest of them would be in a fine way when they missed him, for an attack had been planned for that very night, on the Revenue Cutter that had been hovering round all the week. But Derrick cared little what they thought, and he clenched his teeth hard as he bounded down the rocky pathway and took the narrow cliff track.

He might be wrong after all, Elfreda might not be there, she might have climbed the "Devil's Rock" instead; more than once he had seen her there, but still he kept on trusting to luck, as was his custom.

He could hear the surf as it beat on the rocks below, and more than once he looked anxiously seaward, but no light marked where either the smuggling craft or the Cutter lay.

At last the pathway came abruptly to an end, but without stopping Derrick climbed down over the huge slippery black rocks until he gained the ledge he sought.

It was a broad shelf of smooth rock, completely hidden and sheltered from the beach below by a large projecting boulder, but it commanded a perfect and uninterrupted view of the sea, and the ragged line of coast could be seen for miles round. It was here that Penlaron had seen Elfreda come day after day; he had watched her nimble figure through his telescope from the deck of the "Speedy." But there was no red woollen cap and curly head to tell him that Elfreda sat behind the big rock on his left, although he held the lantern high, and called her once softly by her name, the red colour mounting to his tanned skin as he did so, pitch dark though it was.

Then his heart almost stopped beating, and his tall figure swayed as far, far down below, borne upwards with the salt spray, came a sound, a faint pitiful cry. Twice the young man heard it, then all was silent.

"My God! she has fallen;" the words forced themselves through his dry lips. To think was to do, and almost before he had realized where he was he had scrambled back, and stood on the beach below, while the soapy foam of the waves curled at his feet.

Throwing away the lantern which he could no longer hold, Derrick began his perilous journey over the glistening dark brown rocks, while the roaring surf swept round his ankles, sometimes soaking him in spray as it dashed against the cliff.

"Elfreda, Elfreda!" rung out his strong mellow voice. "Elfreda, are you there?"

A wild despairing cry answered him.

"Where, where?" called Derrick, as with tightly closed lips he pressed onwards, while the water streamed from his soaking oil-skins and ran down his face in torrents. Then he found her! A cold trembling little hand was stretched out to him from the darkness, and this time he took it and held it tightly.

"I am so glad you have come, oh, so glad," said Elfreda, her calmness nearly giving way, as she rose from the hard rock on which she had taken refuge to escape the soaking spray. "I am not hurt fortunately, although I must have fallen a great way," she said. "But—oh, let us get back quickly."

Her voice broke off trembling, and Derrick felt a cold sweat break over him as he heard it, for how were they to get back? How could he take her from where he had just come, she would be dashed to pieces. He had narrowly escaped as it was; he who had all his life been used to battling against all weathers, and risking his life on the rocky heights. Yet if they remained where they were they would be drowned where they stood, dashed to pieces by the cruel, greedy waves. Strong man as he was, his lips quivered, and the tears rushed to his eyes. He had saved her once, long, long ago, when they were both children, and now must he tell her to prepare for death; would the surging, heaving waters claim her after all these years?

"I cannot take you back—it is impossible." He spoke by a mere effort of will.

"What! we must stay here, stay here and die?" Elfreda cried. She had forgotten to be brave, poor child, and the scalding tears rolled down her pale cheeks and choked her. "Oh! surely, surely God will not let us die yet!" The anguish of her young voice drove Derrick nearly mad.

"We shall be saved, we must; they will find us. But Miss Trewenna—Elfreda—will you stay here, will you promise not to stir, and I will go back and bring help; I shall not be long, I——" His sentence was never finished; just then a huge, foaming wave reared its crest high above the rock, and then with a roar of thunder descended upon them. Derrick seized Elfreda in his arms, while she with one low piercing cry buried her face on his breast. For one minute Derrick thought it was all over, that the end, the terrible end had come; but the wave had but soaked them through and through.

Half smothered the young man drew a long breath: for the time they were saved, and Elfreda shaking like an aspen leaf, but strangely calm, withdrew herself from his arms, and stood there, her young face ghastly white, her eyes dark and brilliant, waiting—waiting for death, for the next wave must dash them to pieces, or wash them away with it. Not a word was uttered, only the deafening thunder rang in their ears, and the night wind moaned a little.

"It is coming! Darling let me hold you," said Derrick in a voice strange and hollow, and then Elfreda looked up suddenly, just as a vivid flash lighted up all around, and for one brief second those two young creatures looked into each other's eyes. Derrick's blue ones shone with a strange light as he looked down with a wild yearning into the great sad trustful grey ones.

"Elfreda, Elfreda," he murmured hoarsely.

"Derrick, Derrick," came the answer, and then clasped together they waited while the huge wave came rolling onwards. A loud report, a sudden frightful whirring noise like that of a hundred engines—it had reached them, and then neither remembered any more.

## CHAPTER IV.

ELFREDA sat back in the arm-chair that was brought up close to the Squire's writing table. She looked pale, and there were dark shadows beneath her eyes. She had not yet got over the frightful shock she had received, and at night she still fancied the cruel waves were strangling her, and she would wake gasping for breath. How she had been mercifully rescued, she hardly knew; only a hazy recollection of being roughly seized by someone, and the sound of cries and men's hoarse voices remained to her, and then when she had opened her eyes she had been lying safely in her own little white bed at home, while Miss Trewenna, her hard old face changed and anxious, bent over her, and put brandy to her lips. Now it was all over, but Elfreda grew paler and paler as the days went on, and more restless. Derrick Penlaron's face was continually rising before her. Where was he? Had he been saved too? Why did no one mention his name?

But at last she heard of him. The Squire sat in his carved oak chair, the morning paper in his hands and the gold rimmed eye-glasses on his nose. Miss Trewenna sat working as usual, and Elfreda lay back in her chair, idle and listless.

"Dear, dear, I am very sorry to see this," began the Squire, a frown wrinkling up his forehead. "My dear, shall I read this aloud? Really these smugglers are passing all bounds."

Elfreda felt the hot blood rush to her cheek and her heart gave a suffocating little thump. The Squire cleared his throat and read.

"Fight between the crew of the Revenue Cutter 'Flying Fish' and the smugglers."

"Last Tuesday night, about nine o'clock, a sharp struggle ensued between the crew of H.M.S. 'Flying Fish' and the smuggling craft 'Speedy,' at the mouth of Trewenna's Cove, just off the 'Danger Rock.' The sea was comparatively smooth, although the surf was running high in-shore. Lieutenant Colwell ordered the Cutter to lay off the 'Rock,' and all hands were on the look-out for the 'Speedy,' which was supposed to be somewhere in the neighbourhood. About 9.30, much to the surprise of Lieutenant Colwell, a dark looking craft was seen bearing right down upon them from the opposite direction to the Cove, and in less than ten minutes had run alongside.

"A whole gang of masked and well armed men boarded and cut down all who came in their way, without as much as a word. The crew of the Cutter very soon put them to the right about, and drove them steadily back towards their own vessel. Unfortunately Lieutenant Colwell was killed and several of the seamen badly wounded; three of the smugglers were killed, and five captured, but the one who so brutally killed Lieutenant Colwell escaped. It is very well known that he was none other than the renowned and most daring hand among them, namely Derrick Penlaron, who was easily identified by his enormous height and great strength. The prisoners will be brought up before his Lordship Judge Wyatt, at the next county assizes. It is thought by most that Penlaron will only get his desserts if the sentence is hanging.

"We are glad to inform our readers by special telegram that the notorious smuggler was captured last night, not far from his own home near Trewenna."

The Squire put down the paper and Miss Trewenna muttered "Dear, dear" in a shocked tone. Elfreda said nothing, she only lay back further in her chair, her young face white as death, her eyes closed. She had not fainted, but it seemed as if something had suddenly snapped in her heart; the room heaved and swam before her eyes, a strange singing sounded in her ears. Miss Trewenna's voice brought her back to herself.

"Good heavens, the child has fainted," cried the old lady, but Elfreda shook her head slightly and tottered to her feet.

"No, no, I am all right. I only felt a little faint for a minute. I think I will go upstairs for a time." She groped her way like a blind person towards the door, and was gone.

However she got upstairs Elfreda never knew, but she was conscious of a sense of relief in throwing herself on her bed, and lying there with her hands over her face. Was she going mad, she wondered, why was she lying on her bed? The girl rose and pressed her hand to her eyes, she must be calm, she must collect her thoughts somehow.

Tuesday, last Tuesday night, where was she? She remembered now; should she ever forget; and he had been with her then, had held her in his arms; had—had—oh, Elfreda did not quite know what had happened. Why did her tiresome hands tremble so, and her limbs shake under her? Would the mist never clear away; was

she going blind, or what? Then suddenly her brain cleared, she saw Penlaron's figure before her distinctly, his tall strong figure and frank handsome face, his blue eyes were looking at her, his bright beautiful blue eyes, asking her to help him, save him if needs be. It was then that Elfreda formed her plans. She was quite herself now, although the old joyous light had gone out of her face, and instead there was a look of quiet determination, a look that quite scared Miss Trewenna and made her wonder if the girl were quite right.

The Squire was astonished when Elfreda said to him the next day she wished to be driven into R— on the day of the prisoner's trial. Somehow the Squire dared not say nay to this white faced maiden, with the great wide sorrowful eyes, and so, on Thursday morning, Elfreda robed herself in a neat gray cloth dress which she generally wore on Sundays, tied a thick veil over her gray felt hat and bright chesnut curls, and took her place beside the Squire in the high two-wheeled trap, and they drove off. Not once did Elfreda open her lips, only as they entered the quaint old-fashioned market town and drew up before the "Court House," her mouth quivered, and she clenched her hands tightly together so that the nails ran into her soft flesh.

The Court was full, crowded even, for it was seldom indeed that smugglers were captured, especially such a well-known one as Derrick Penlaron.

Elfreda would not sit down or rest anywhere; she stood like a living statue beside the doorway, and fixed her eyes immoveably on the prisoner's dock.

The three smugglers were tried and each sentenced to imprisonment, but Elfreda hardly heard the sentence. Then suddenly the people all became a black heaving mass before her as Derrick Penlaron entered the dock.

The crowded court showed signs of a suppressed excitement, there were a good many claps and a few hisses, but order was called for angrily and the case proceeded.

There he stood, alone and almost undefended, his head held high in a sort of proud defiance, his blue eyes flashing fire, his face deadly pale, but rigid and motionless.

All at once he seemed to start, and clutch hold of the iron railing; for a minute his keen eye dropped and a deep slow burning colour mounted to his forehead; when he looked up again, all were astonished

at the fixed hardness of his expression. One after another the witnesses were called, but none of them had much to say except that Derrick Penlaron had not been with them on the evening of the fight, but none could say or even guess where he had been.

Elfreda had asked her father to write on his card and send it to the clerk sitting below the judge: "My daughter, Miss Trewenna, is anxious to give evidence, as she knows where the prisoner was on the night of the 10th, when a boatman of the name of Frewen rescued her and another person from beneath the rocks near Trewenna Cove."

On the summons of the judge she entered the witness-box, pale and trembling from excitement.

The prosecuting counsel asked her what she knew of the prisoner's movements on the night in question, and why she appeared.

Elfreda answered that she had been very ill since the 10th, and had not heard of the encounter on board the Revenue Cutter, until her father that morning had read aloud from a newspaper that the trial of the smugglers would take place that day. She then detailed facts already given, her fall and the peril she was in, and the accidental and providential arrival of Derrick.

She was somewhat roughly cross-examined by the prosecuting counsel, who asked her if she was in any way connected with the prisoner, or in short if any love passage had passed between them, and if she was clandestinely engaged to him. Elfreda replied quietly that she only felt grateful to him for the attempt he had made to save her, and as she knew where he had been on the evening in question, and therefore could not have been on board the smuggling craft, she had insisted upon telling what she knew. Her father corroborated her account of her rescue by "Frewen," but did not know of Derrick's part in it, or that he had been with her, her illness having prevented all inquiry, as the doctor insisted that while so weak, she should not be taxed with any of the incidents painful to her memory.

Bill Frewen was then called, and said he was in his boat, had heard the cries, and went to the rescue. He gave a clear and concise account of what had happened, and said that he himself had helped to carry Miss Trewenna from the rocks up to the Court, but it had been too dark to recognise the other person, who had been with her. He had only seen that he was very tall, and had not

appeared much the worse for his wetting, since he had disappeared soon after Miss Trewenna had been carried into the house.

This was all that Bill Frewen knew. After the Judge had summed up, the jury adjourned to consider their verdict.

All the time that Elfreda had been in the box, Derrick had stood like one turned to stone, his blue eyes fixed immoveably on her face, but now that her work was done, Elfreda seemed suddenly to loose all control over herself; at the door the Squire met her, and sobbing, the girl, regardless of spectators, threw herself into his arms and cried as though her heart would break.

"My brave darling, my poor child, dear little Freda," murmured the Squire tenderly, as he led her into the waiting-room.

"Don't stay; go, go and hear what the verdict is," she cried half hysterically, and the Squire hurried away. But Elfreda could not bear the suspense of waiting; brushing away her tears, she flew after him, just as the foreman of the jury pronounced in a loud voice the verdict "not guilty."

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## CHAPTER V.

AND now it was that the Squire thought it time that Elfreda should know the history of how she came to Trewenna Cove. The old man had a subtle feeling that things were changing, and that Elfreda was drifting away from him and his. And so Elfreda was sent for to the study. The Squire stood by the window when she entered the room, and Derrick Penlaron stood with his back to the mantleshef, his strong brown hand playing nervously with the china figures thereon. Elfreda started when she perceived him, and a light came into her gray eyes. Then the Squire came towards her, and his hand trembled strangely as it sought hers, and his keen hazel eyes glittered suspiciously. He told her in as few words as he could command, for his voice was husky and trembled. Elfreda never uttered a word, but as the Squire stopped speaking the tears rose thickly in her eyes, and with a little cry she threw her arms around his neck.

"But I love you, I shall always love you just the same, although I—I am not your daughter."

The tears gathered in the old man's eyes too. Derrick coughed and turned away his head and stared at a picture on the wall.

"You are my daughter, and always will be, nothing can change that," said the Squire hurriedly.

"But my name, my name is not Trewenna at all, what is it?" cried Elfreda piteously.

The Squire shook his head. "I cannot tell you, my child," he said.

"Then I have no name, I am nobody—nobody!"

Derrick Penlaron strode forward and caught both her trembling hands in his. "Not while I live. Elfreda, Elfreda, listen to me! It was I who saved you from the wreck and brought you safe to shore, Elfreda, won't you let me give you my name. Will you marry me?"

She turned bewildered from one to the other, "I love you with all my heart, with all my soul and strength," he continued rapidly. "I saved your life and you saved mine by your brave-hearted fearlessness. Elfreda won't you come to me?"

She gazed on him as he stood there, a splendid figure truly, his dark head erect, his blue eyes gazing at her, filled with a passionate and pleading look.

"Go to him, child; he is worthy of you, and will make you happy," said the Squire huskily, as he winked back the tears from his kind old eyes. But Elfreda hesitated for a moment, and then threw her loving young arms around the old man's neck.

"Father, father—you will remain my father always just the same—you will never love anyone better than your little Freda?" She looked to him silently, but the Squire released her gently.

"Give him your answer, dearie," he said steadily. And then Elfreda turned to her lover, a soft flitting colour in her cheeks, her gray eyes misty with tears.

"Dear, dear Derrick," she said simply, putting her slender little hands on his shoulders and looking frankly up at him, and in the excessiveness of his joy the young man bent and kissed her, his eyes glowing with as much passion and earnestness as when he called upon the throng of watching men to help him launch the life-boat nearly fourteen years ago.

\* \* \* \*

But all this happened years ago, in the days when the Cornish sea harboured many a strange craft. And Elfreda lives at "Postle-waithy" now, and whoever she was, whoever her parents were, it makes but little difference, as her husband often tells her, for she is for ever and aye "until death us do part," Mrs. Derrick Penlaron.

## Early Days of Mozart.

By SARAH CATHERINE BUDD,

Author of "HAYDN," "MYSTERY OF CASTLE CROME," etc., etc.

"NANNEREL has a wonderful talent for music—I mean to give her regular instruction and begin this very day."

Thus spake Leopold Mozart one bright cold day in January, in the year seventeen hundred and fifty-eight. He was chapel master at Salzburg, and an excellent teacher, being well up in the theory and composition of music. He was a stern, reliable man; devoted to his art, but parsimonious to a degree, and he ruled his family with a rod of iron.

Anna Maria (playfully called Nannerel) came timidly towards the old harpsichord, proud of the dignity of taking lessons, but rather afraid of her stern father. Little did the Mozart family imagine what a memorable day this would prove in their history.

Playing about the room was a toddling child of two years old, afterwards the famous Mozart. As soon as the first sounds of music floated through the room, he left off playing with his toy, and listened attentively: no sooner had his sister left the instrument, than he toddled up to it and tried to reproduce the sounds with his chubby little fingers.

His father—wise and far-seeing—was much struck with this little incident, and determined to devote himself to the musical education of this wonderful child. From that day little Wolfgang Mozart was never happy unless when trying to reproduce musical sounds. His playthings were discarded, except those associated with music, but he would march and sing with his playfellows in high glee. At four years old his father gave him regular instruction, and at the age of five he composed little pieces, which Leopold wrote down for him.

The child had no taste for any study but music—if we except arithmetic. He could do quite difficult sums in his head at an early age. Fond however as Wolfgang was of figures in the abstract, he never had the least idea of the true value of money. His father's penurious ways early disgusted him, and in the reaction, he betrayed

a horror of the management of money, and eventually became a careless spendthrift.

One day Wolfgang was very busy over a paper in which there were some strange-looking scrawls. "What are you doing, my little boy?" asked his father.

"I am writing a concerto, papa," the child promptly replied, "I have nearly finished it." Leopold took the paper from the little boy's hand, and at first could make nothing of it. Gradually, however, the meaning dawned upon him, and his heart throbbed with joy and pride.

"Look here!" cried he to a friend standing by, "this is all composed according to the correct rules of art, but is almost too difficult to play."

"I tell you it is a concerto," exclaimed the child reddening, "and it must be practised until it can be played; I will show you a little about it," and going to the piano he tried to bring out his harmony. Of course with his tiny hands, he was unable to do this, but there came such a flood of melody, that his father was lost in wonder and admiration.

Not only did Leopold Mozart—looking into the future—see the reflected glory that would fall upon him as the father of such a genius, but no doubt he thought of the gain that would follow. From that time he resolved to give the boy a wider scope than Salzburg could offer. Accordingly, in the spring of 1762 the whole Mozart family went to Munich, and the two children performed before the Elector of Bavaria with great applause. In September of that year Leopold took his gifted children on another tour: this time they went to Vienna, and played before the Court. The Emperor Francis I. of Austria took great notice of them, and gave Wolfgang a fancy dress which had been prepared for the little Archduke Maximilian.

One day the Emperor said to the child, "It is not perhaps so very difficult to play with all one's fingers, but to play with one finger without seeing the keys would indeed be wonderful."

Without the least appearance of surprise Wolfgang turned to the harpsichord, and with only one finger played many difficult passages. He then covered the instrument and played blindfold, and performed so wonderfully that all around thought he must have been in the habit of playing in that manner.

The child soon became the darling of the young Archduchesses, daughters of the Empress. One day, two of them, by way of a treat, took little Wolfgang over the palace and showed him all its grandeur and beauty, but the poor little fellow, quite unused to the polished floors, fell flat down on the corridor. One of the young princesses was too haughty to take any notice of this mishap, but the younger caressingly raised him up and made much of him.

The child looking earnestly into her face, said "Thank you, you are so kind, I should like to marry you." The girl laughed carelessly, and swept lightly over the polished floor, little thinking what lay before her in the future, for this girl was the beautiful and ill-fated Marie Antoinette.

One can fancy that a shadow ever watched beside her, but alas! there was none to warn her of her doom.

During Wolfgang's stay at Vienna he bought himself a small violin, and on his return to Salzburg he soon learned to play it. One day, Wenzl, a clever violinist, came to Leopold Mozart, bringing with him six trios which he had composed during his friend's absence, and asked him to try them. Mozart was to take the bass, Wenzl the first, and Schactner the second violin. We will record this anecdote in Schactner's own words:

"Little Wolfgang," he says, "asked permission to take the second violin, which I had offered to play. His father rather sharply replied that as he had never received any regular lessons on the violin, he could not possibly play. The little boy to this rather sullenly answered that 'no lessons were needed to take a second violin.' Then Mozart peremptorily told the little boy to go away, and as Wolfgang took up his violin I saw that he was weeping bitterly. His tears moved me, for I loved the child dearly, and I begged permission for him to play. To this Leopold at last consented, only saying sternly to the child, 'Wolfgang, you may play with Mr. Schactner on condition that you play very softly and do not let yourself be heard.' We began the trio, little Wolfgang playing with me, and I soon found with the greatest astonishment that I was perfectly useless. Without saying anything I laid down my violin and looked at his father, who shed tears of delight."

It is not surprising after this that Schactner became exceedingly fond of the boy, and occasionally lent him his own beautiful violin to practise on. One day he found Wolfgang playing on his own

violin, but the instant he saw his friend, the little boy cried out, "I love your violin best, I can draw such soft tones from it, but please let me have it tuned just as it was when I had it first. Yours is half of a quarter below mine. On hearing this, Schactner sent for his violin, and found it was precisely at the pitch the child had indicated.

This extreme musical sensitiveness was often a pain to Wolfgang: the least discordant note became an agony and until he was ten year old the very sound of a trumpet terrified him. His father—always a stern man—in the endeavour to break him of this fear had a trumpet blown suddenly before the child. At the very first blast, he turned deadly pale, and fell flat on the floor; convulsions would most probably have followed had they not immediately ceased playing. In truth, the delicate boy was too sensitive in feeling, for health, strength or happiness.

His playing had now become so exquisite, from his genius and the polish of constant practice and study, that his father thought it was time that he should be more widely known to the world, and at Paris he expected to gather a rich harvest. Accordingly the whole Mozart family started on their tour, travelling cheaply and leisurely visiting many places of note on their way. They reached Paris in November, 1763, and remained there five months. Among the many letters of introduction the Mozart family brought with them, was one to Herr Grimm, the secretary of the Duke of Orleans. He was exceedingly kind and courteous, and as a guide in their brilliant Paris life, proved invaluable. In a letter to a friend Grimm gives a description of them which we will quote in his own words.

"We have a *Kapellmeister* here," he says, "from Salzburg, named Mozart. He has two charming children. The elder of the two, a girl of eleven, plays the piano in a very brilliant manner, executing the most difficult pieces with perfect time and precision. The younger, a boy scarcely seven, is so extraordinary a genius one can hardly believe one's own eyes and ears as witnesses to his performances. He not only plays the most intricate and difficult music with little hands that can barely stretch a sixth, but he extemporizes, often for hours together, with a continuous flow of harmonious and beautiful ideas. He writes and composes with amazing fluency without approaching the instrument at all. The most learned musician could not with technical knowledge exceed his intuitions on modulation and harmony. I gave him a minuet, and asked him to set a bass to

it. He seized a pen and did so without even looking at the piano: of course it costs him nothing to transpose any air into any key which may be desired. But the following performance I myself witnessed, or I could scarcely have believed it: A lady asked him to accompany her in an Italian Cavatina; she sang without her notes, giving him no music. The child's fingers wandered over the basses as she sang, and as soon as she had ceased he begged her to re-commence the air, and then played a beautiful and complete accompaniment.

"He begged her to sing again and again the same air, and each time varied entirely the character of his accompaniment. This was repeated ten times.

"I can scarcely see how such wonderful genius can be preserved, and the child's head not be completely turned by the admiration he must always excite."

Certainly Herr Grimm was very kind to the Mozart family and helped to make their visit to Paris a great success. They gave concerts, and were received into the first society by the Court and the whole of the Royal Family; even Madame de Pompadour fêted them, and the Queen encouraged little Wolfgang to prattle to her in German, which mightily amused the old blasé Louis the Fifteenth. So accustomed was the little fellow to be caressed, that he one day boldly asked Madame de Pompadour why she had not kissed him: "The Queen kisses me," he naïvely said.

Nothing was to be heard at this time but praises of these wonderful children, and Leopold, with the acuteness and business-like talent which ever distinguished him, thought he might now venture to publish a few of his little son's works. He accordingly brought out four sonatas, two of which were dedicated to the Princess Victoire, second daughter of Louis the Fifteenth.

After this glorious winter at Paris, during which however, nothing was allowed to interfere with the children's regular practising, so as to impart the greatest polish to their musical gifts, Leopold thought he might venture on a season in London, the land—as he called it—"of guineas and old music."

The reception of the Mozart family in London was quite as gratifying as it had been in Paris. The children performed before George the Third and Queen Charlotte, who were both good judges of music, and their appreciative interest roused little Mozart to the

highest pitch of enthusiasm. The memory of Handel too, who had only recently died, lingered in the boy's mind, and he used to gaze thoughtfully and earnestly at the monument, placed between Newton and Shakespeare, in the glorious old Westminster Abbey.

When only eight years old he played some difficult and abstruse music simply from sight, when it was placed before him, even fugues of Handel and Bach. At this tender age he seems to have had the musical power of a man, and his father averred that he knew all that was necessary for a professor of forty.

One day he performed before the king something more difficult than anything he had ever before attempted. He was playing in one of the rooms of the palace, where there happened to be a bass of Handel lying on the piano. He took it up, and from the simple figured chords drew the most exquisite melody.

There is an interesting notice of Mozart, in a volume of "Philosophical Transactions," bearing date 1770, written by Barrington, who speaks of the boy as a "musical psychological wonder." Especially did he marvel at seeing the child play, from score, a piece written for two violins and a bass: Mozart gave the idea of this concerted music on the piano, making the leading theme perfectly clear. He also began to sing about this time, in a sweet childish voice, but with exquisite purity of tone.

The success and genius of the boy were so extraordinary, that envy tried to throw its dark shadow over his fame. Questions began to be raised about the child's age. Some people stoutly declared that he must be at least fourteen or fifteen years old, as they could not believe in such precocious genius. The dispute became so warm that at length Count Haslang, the Bavarian Ambassador, sent to Salzburg for a copy of the child's baptismal register, and thus the question was laid to rest.

During his residence in London Mozart wrote six sonatas, which he dedicated to Queen Charlotte. In July, 1765, the Mozart family left England, delighted with their success and the reception they had met with. They went to Calais, and passing through Flanders arrived at the Hague, by invitation of the Princess of Nassau-Weilburg. Here the children fell seriously ill, but the Princess lavished the utmost care and attention upon them, and after Mozart's recovery he wrote six sonatas, which he gracefully dedicated to his benefactress.

The Mozarts then went for a month to Amsterdam, but returned to the Hague to be present at the installation of the Prince of Orange, brother to their friend, the Princess of Nassau. Mozart composed a grand piece for this fête in which all the instruments of the orchestra played together, and then each in turn played variations on the same air. After this fête was over the Mozarts paid a flying visit to Amsterdam, and gave two concerts during Lent, because, as the people declared, "the wonderful gifts of the children showed forth the praises of God."

In the spring of 1766 the Mozart family returned to Paris for a time, where their friend Herr Grimm was still staying. He speaks at length of these precocious children, and I will quote his own words: "We have again here the two charming children of the Kapellmeister of the Archbishop of Salzburg, who delighted us all two years ago. They have been eighteen months in England and six in Holland, and are now on their way home. Wherever they have travelled there has been but one voice in their praise. Mdlle. Mozart, now fourteen years old, is very pleasing in manners and appearance; plays the piano beautifully and with great taste and expression. It is only the amazing gifts of her brother that make hers less noticed. He is now nine years old; and has scarcely grown at all since he was here, except in his art, in which he has made great strides. Many esteemed musicians and kapellmeisters die, without knowing what this child of nine does, of harmony. One might descant for hours on this extraordinary phenomenon. He is also one of the most lovable beings possible; everything he says and does is so full of spirit and sentiment, united with the simplicity of his age. The only fear he can excite is, that fruit so early ripe should be plucked before its time. If this child should live, Salzburg would never hold him, the sovereigns of Europe would dispute for him. His father is not only an artist, but a man of great sense, more than I have ever seen in a person of his position."

After the Mozarts left Paris they went to Switzerland and made the acquaintance of Solomon Gessner, who gave Wolfgang a copy of his works with this inscription:— "To the Pride of Germany and the Wonder of the World."

At Munich, on their way home, the Elector gave Mozart a musical theme, telling him to develop it and write it down at once in his presence, without any aid from violin or harpsichord; this he did easily,

to the profound astonishment of the Elector and the whole Court. Soon after this the Mozart family returned to Salzburg after an absence of three years. Here they were received with enthusiasm. When they went away they were of no importance and their musical gifts slighted. Now that the world had set its seal of approbation upon the children's amazing gifts, and they had become famous and needed no help, hands were stretched out and lavish praises met them on all sides.

The Mozarts, however, were too shrewd to be deceived, and they merely used Salzburg as a place to refit and rest in, before beginning as it were, another campaign. Wolfgang had leisure now to study the works of the great masters, and this time of study and practice enriched his whole life and compositions; the calm, regular living improved his health and benefited him in every way. At length Leopold thought it was time to win fresh laurels, so he took his children to Vienna where they were received with the utmost kindness and enthusiasm, by Joseph II, and the whole of his Court. This aroused a feeling of jealousy in some of the veteran musicians at Vienna, and a report was spread that Wolfgang did not write all the compositions ascribed to him. To set this question at rest for ever, Leopold Mozart caused a large party to assemble at the rooms of the great master, Metastasio, and challenged any one of the party to open Metastasio's works and give his son a subject for music. This was done, and Wolfgang sat down and immediately wrote a song and its accompaniment, exquisitely suited to the words given to him. Afterwards Leopold invited anyone to give him an air, requiring the boy to write at once parts for all the instruments, so as to make a concerted piece; this also the child did with splendid success.

The crowning glory, however, of Mozart's stay in Vienna was when the church of an orphanage had to be consecrated, and solemn music was required; this Wolfgang was invited to produce. A mass, a motet and a trumpet duet were needed, and the composer was to conduct the orchestra in person. This was a glorious opportunity indeed, to vindicate his genius. Crowds gathered to hear the performance, and the Emperor and the whole of his court were present. It was truly a strange sight. All the glitter of the great assemblage on the one hand, and on the other a slight boy of twelve at the head of a great orchestra, the music of which he had himself composed.

This reminds one instinctively of a scene in Prince Lobkowitz's Palace, many years after, when the great and good Haydn—then fast nearing the Eternal shore—was carried in to hear his own grand work, "The Creation," with an orchestra of a hundred and sixty performers, and an audience composed of the flower of the nobility of Vienna. Haydn, however, was at the close of a long and well-spent life, and Mozart just standing on the threshold, with a splendid career opening before him. The performance proved a grand and complete success, and a perfect triumph over his enemies. The Empress, on this occasion, gave Wolfgang a magnificent present, and the Emperor congratulated him warmly.

Soon after this the Mozart family left Vienna, and returned to Salzburg to study counterpoint and the Italian language, as a visit to Italy was in contemplation. During this stay at Salzburg, Wolfgang was made director of the chapel of the Archbishop of Salzburg, everyone in his native place being anxious now to do him honour.

After remaining a year at Salzburg, Mozart, accompanied by his father, and—for the first time—leaving his mother and sister at home, went to Milan, where he was engaged to write the music for an opera to be performed at the carnival of 1771. After a series of presents, fêtes, and concerts, which made Mozart's journey through Italy one long ovation, they went to Bologna. At Bologna, Wolfgang made the acquaintance of Padre Martini—Jomelli's Master—a musical oracle, and the greatest counterpoint of his age. It was amazing to see this boy of twelve—small for his age—developing the subjects of fugues Martini gave him, and executing them perfectly on the pianoforte. Martini was delighted with the boy, and some months after made him a member of the Philharmonic Academy of Bologna. Here, also, Mozart made the acquaintance of Farnelli, a remarkable man. As physician and singer he had cured the malady of Philip the Fifth of Spain. As prime minister of the country, he used his power wisely and well, and when Court favour declined, he resigned his office with dignity, and retired to a lovely villa at Bologna, and spent the rest of his days in peace.

The friendship between Farnelli and the boy was very warm and deep, and it was touching to see Mozart in the dawn of his glory, admiring and leaning upon one who had safely passed through the storms of life, and was calmly resting in the sunset of his days.

The approach of Holy Week at Rome, drew Wolfgang away from Bologna in 1770. Of course the music of Passion Week, at the Sistine Chapel, was his great object.

At that time the Pope's musicians were forbidden under pain of excommunication, to give copies of the "*Miserere*" then performed. Mozart, knowing this, and being struck by the sublime performance, determined to commit it to memory. This feat the boy actually accomplished, hiding the MS. in his hat. Leopold tried to hush the matter up, but Wolfgang not being equally careful, the affair leaked out. The people in Rome would not believe the story, and at a public concert he was asked to sing the "*Miserere*." This he did to the amazement of Cristofori—the chief singer of the papal band—who had sung it at the Sistine Chapel. What was his astonishment to hear all the turns and changes of expression, the crescendos and diminuendos, the sorrowful passion, and depth of feeling, the exact *manner* reproduced on which the sublime effect entirely depends. The applause was overwhelming, and Mozart was placed on the highest pinnacle of popularity in Rome.

From Rome the Mozarts proceeded to Naples, where Wolfgang played on the pianoforte at the Conservatorio alla Pietà. Here the people were so overwhelmed with astonishment at the boy's playing, that they thought he must be bewitched, and some even said they noticed the magic ring upon his finger. This being whispered to Mozart, he calmly arose, took the ring from his finger, and putting it down on the piano, continued the sonata exactly where he had been interrupted. When the audience found that the music continued equally beautiful without the aid of magic, their admiration knew no bounds.

Wolfgang gave one more grand concert at the house of Prince Kaunitz—his early patron at Vienna—and then returned to Rome, where he had an audience of the Pope, by papal command, and received a Cross and Brevet of a Knight of the Golden Militia, which he wore during the rest of his visit to Rome.

During the whole of this Italian journey, Wolfgang kept up a lively correspondence with his sister "*Nannerel*," of whom he was passionately fond.

His letters are curious compositions, for he was lamentably ignorant of everything but music, and quite incapable of writing a connected letter, except, indeed, upon a musical subject, when he gave a clear

and sensible criticism. Mozart made now, in 1770, his first débüt as a great dramatic composer, having brought out a grand opera called "Mithridates." Of course this, his first opera, had not the glorious powers which he afterwards developed, but it turned out a grand success, being performed twenty nights in succession.

After the Italian journey and triumphs, Mozart returned to his little peaceful home at Salzburg, to the beloved companionship of his mother and sister, and here, with his childhood ended, we must bring this first notice of Mozart to a close.

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### An Up-to-Date Letter.

TO SHUFFLUMS CRAB,

HUMBUG HOUSE.

MY DEAR SON,

As you are no longer a Crabling, but are sufficiently advanced in life to make your entrée into Fishdom, a little advice may be beneficial.

To begin with, you may have sometimes compared your own sidelong gait with the straightforward walk of others outside the pale of Crabdom. The custom was originated by an ancestor who coveted fame, and knew no better road to it than by doing something different to every one else. With practice he became such an adept in the sidelong gait, that at last it was an impossibility for him to proceed in any other way. His renown spread far and wide: the peculiarity descended to his children, and nowadays, no Crab, however much he should desire it, would be able to walk in a straightforward manner.

Sidelong gait is but an easy prelude to sidelong speech; and upon this head some hints may be of service. This custom was also originated by an ancestor who desired power and wealth, and found he could acquire both by this means.

Plainness and simplicity are easily recognized and understood. What is once understood ceases to interest. Therefore you will be interesting to others in proportion as you mystify them. Mystery implies secrecy; you must ever seek to hide yourself, and this is

best managed by never assuming the positive. From the moment that a Crab's character is established, he ceases to be a "Nine days Wonder," and has to give way to the next comer. Make it your endeavour to be not a "Nine days" but a "Perpetual Wonder." With such a reputation your fortune will be assured.

Outsiders will wish to label you with the ordinary titles—steady, wild, honest, deceitful, &c. You must determine to go through life without such labels. By this means, you will be constantly in the thoughts of others, who will ever renew their efforts to discover *you*. They will say, "He is such a clever fellow, that we can make nothing of him; he's beyond us altogether." And the hearer will resolve at the earliest opportunity to test his capabilities upon you, and see for himself whether he cannot taste and determine of what brand is this wondrous spirit that defies all attempt at analysis.

A crab once cultivated one style of manner which he exhibited to all, and at all seasons. I need scarcely inform you of the disastrous consequences of this folly. No one bestowed a moment's thought upon him, and he swiftly sank into obscurity. You, my dear son, must regard your manner as a part of your wardrobe, and must vary it as you vary your costume. The quiet thoughtful aspect will hang on one peg; the gay and boisterous on another; the lofty and patronizing will lie beside the submissive and deferential; you will doff the humbly-inquiring for the well-read and condescending; the simple and blunt, for the flattering and suave air. In fact, you will be all things to all men, as may best suit your purpose. Regard all crabs whom you meet as stepping-stones for your own advancement. Make no scruple of standing upon them whenever you may thereby elevate yourself.

Having shown you how essential is Mystery as an elevator, let me advise you as to its use in speech. It is easily done, and the Crablings of another generation will not need to be taught; for it will be as impossible to them to give a direct answer, as to take a straightforward step. Never allow your meaning to be clear. This is where you will surpass your fellows. In the remarks of the ordinary Crab, the point with its crude outlines, is plainly apparent. Your point, on the contrary, must never shock the spectator in this rude fashion. It must be so clothed and draped that to the naked eye it is invisible; and when surveyed from a height with the aid of powerful magnifying glasses but faintly discernible.

Discard the Indicative and Imperative, and limit yourself to the Conditional, Potential and Subjunctive moods. Follow the example of the celebrated C—— who, when asked whether he was sure of his own existence, replied, "Being unaware of what is comprised in the letter *I*, to tell you that *I* existed would be ridiculous. It would be equally absurd to say that *I* was deceased. For what am *I*? It is impossible to say. The attempt at self-description would be as difficult as the definition of a ghost, who only exists in imagination. Perhaps there is no such thing as *I* at all, and *I* am only the creation of men's disordered minds."

This Crab lived and died with a sacred halo of mystery encircling his brows. You have access to his writings. Let me close this epistle with the recommendation that you make him your reference upon all occasions. Accept the good wishes and parental affection of your so-called Father, otherwise known as Oilus Crab.

V. GOODMAN.

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## The Romantic and The True.

THE recent able article in "The Englishwoman," entitled, "Is Romantic Love an Evil," by The Owl—this wise bird being unmistakably of the opinion that it is an unmitigated evil—has been followed by another dissertation on the subject, in the last number of the same Magazine, but leading to a very different conclusion. The writer of the latter article, A. Cunnick Inchbold, warmly advocates the claims of Romantic Love, and even boldly asserts that Socrates approved it, although the quotations he gives from the wise philosopher by no means bear out this conclusion. In fact, the love that Socrates treats of is a very different sentiment to the so-called Romantic Love under discussion. That this high flown, unreal, and above all transitory hallucination, is essentially selfish is clearly shown by the exacting nature of the passion, and the sacrifices it not unusually demands. A man romantically in love does not scruple to take a girl from a home where she has been surrounded by every care and comfort, to share with him means which barely suffice to support one in comfort, far less a

family. It is no wonder George Meredith speaks of the love season as being "the carnival of egotism," and it may also be added of illusion. Clearly, George Elliot, with her deep insight into human nature, was of the same opinion; "Men and women," she tells us, "make sad mistakes about their own symptoms, taking their vague uneasy longings, sometimes for genius, sometimes for religion, and oftener still for a mighty love." No, love must be built on something more solid than romance, if it is to bear, as Ouida says, "the terrible trials of incessant proximity." This supreme test of affection unfortunately comes too late; and truly it is a test which shatters most of the castles in the air that lovers delight to build. But the love which *The Owl* extols is deepened and intensified by constant companionship. Unwearying patience and tenderness are required in order to make marriage a success—not romantic sentiment. I am not, however, for a moment, advocating marriage without love, but it must be of a totally different nature to the sentiment that enters so largely into the average literature of the present day. Intellectual sympathy, community of interests, and an unselfish attachment is the only solid basis of married life. By the sentimentalists at large, marriage is regarded as though it were the end of all things, whereas, in reality, it is but the beginning of a man or woman's life. The passion that may do very well to carry lovers through a honeymoon of pleasure, is absolutely worthless when the realities of married life, with its attendant cares and duties, have to be faced.

The essential selfishness of Romantic Love has been briefly summed up by *The Owl's* statement that this same romance "has begun in some quarters to supersede the decalogue." We are not surprised to find that amongst the staunchest champions of this sentimental passion, are such avowed advocates of Free Love as Grant Allen and Thomas Hardy. Yet in "*The Woman Who Did*," even Grant Allen is perforce compelled to disclose the fatal result of giving free rein to sentiment, and he wisely kills off the lover before there is time for the illusive charms of this irregular connection to tire. If *The Owl* read this novel, his eyes would no doubt blink with mild disdain as if to say, "I know a better thing than that."

P. B.

## New Books.

AMONG the many interesting books that call for more than passing mention, we have only space to particularly notice a few. Of these, and starting with fiction, we have a capitally written little booklet by Cosmo Hamilton (forming one of Fisher Unwin's Autonym Library), entitled "WHICH IS ABSURD," a name that at once arouses curiosity. The story is not on any especial new lines but has the merit of being told briskly, and some of the characters are hit off in quite a masterly style. Altogether this latest contribution to the Autonym Library, fully bears out the reputation of the series for good writing. "LE SELVE" (T. Fisher Unwin) is a contribution from Ouida's pen. We must admit that, as far as plot goes, we are disappointed. There are some dramatic situations in the book, but there is no doubt that it will be read more for its idyllic beauty than for the lesser merits of the story. "THE UGLY MAN," by the author of "A House of Tears" (Messrs. Downey & Co.) Here is plot with a vengeance! The incidents are all of a thrilling melodramatic character, and there is mystery enough to satisfy the most exacting reader in this respect. There is the mysterious disappearance of a priceless emerald, and the various attendant complications. All this and more is woven into a very readable if rather shallow story, and will agreeably pass away an idle hour or two.

"THE MONEY SPINNER, AND OTHER CHARACTER NOTES," by Henry Seton Merriman and S. G. Tallentyre (Smith, Elder & Co.), illustrated by Arthur Rackham. Several of these sketches are reprints from the "Cornhill Magazine," and all are good, some even rising to excellence; though perhaps the first, from which the title of the collection is derived, is the best told. The art of writing a short story in a telling manner, without unduly nipping the incident or expanding the description at the expense of dialogue is a rare one, and with few notable exceptions—among which, Mrs. W. K. Clifford's sketches must be included—is only beginning to be cultivated. These character notes, therefore, will be welcomed by those who appreciate good short stories.

## The Drama.

THE wordless play now on at the "Prince of Wales's Theatre," set to music by Mario Costa, is an able drama of a human life, and, as the name indicates, of *Pierrot's Life*. The dumb show is so ably expressed by the six comedians who make up the caste, that the descriptive music of the pantomime is not at all essential to the interpretation of the story. The play itself is so true to nature with its mingled mirth and deep pathos, that it appeals to all sorts and conditions of men, particularly to lovers of good acting and good music. The scene where the erring husband, after deserting his wife for a factory girl, returns to seek her forgiveness, is pathetic in the extreme, and the reconciliation effected by their little child is no less touching.

We are not surprised to find that *A Night Out* is still running at the Vaudeville, for the piece is so excessively funny, that while there are playgoers who prefer a good laugh to a cry, it must continue to draw a large audience. Indeed the play is enough to provoke laughter from anyone. The plot lends itself to the most amusing situations, as may be readily conceived by a brief sketch of the piece. We are introduced at first to a married woman and her admirer, who manage to evade the husband's surveillance and arrange to "go out on the spree." By a series of curious coincidences the very venerable father of many daughters, apparently all of the same age, also arrives at the place fixed for the rendezvous, viz., an hotel, as well as some other people who are mutually acquainted. The dénouement is very funny, and its success as a farce unqualified.

Since the introduction of *Under the Red Robe* at the Haymarket, the demand for tickets has been so great, that only those who apply a week or two in advance have been able to secure seats. The subject differs entirely from *The Prisoner of Zenda*, although in other respects it bears a resemblance to this drama, notably in the quality of the play. Mr. Rose has certainly achieved a great success in dramatising these two plays with such happy results, and though perhaps *The Prisoner of Zenda* may be a better novel than Mr. Stanley Weyman's, there is little to choose between the two plays.

M. W.